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H. G. Wittings

HYDE NUGENT.

A TALE

OF

FASHIONABLE LIFE.

However we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won,
Than women's are.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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1827.

A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT FLEET STREET.

HYDE NUGENT.

CHAP. I.

———Sit down : the hour's now come :

The very minute bids thee ope thine ear ;

Obey, and be attentive.

SHAKSPEARE.

WE must now return to town, where the late sad affair had cast a gloom over the Nugent family, especially Louisa, whose marriage with Lord Iford it caused to be for a while postponed. Louisa Nugent was a person possessed of very acute feelings, and the highest delicacy

of mind. She could not be ignorant of the fact, that Burgoyne was wretched. She appreciated his attachment, convinced as she was of its truth and sincerity ; and she highly esteemed him as a man, if we except the blot of irreligion, (a great one certainly,) although she could never accept him as a lover. Grateful for the good opinion he had evinced in his declaration of affection, she was deeply afflicted at the weight of grief which a consciousness of blood upon his hands must have added to his already agitated mind ; and the fact of her brother's having also some share in the latter transaction caused her the most sensible distress. Lord Iford therefore, to whom Louisa was much attached, consented to the delay she wished for, being of course aware of Burgoyne's proposal ; and his opinion of his bride elect was, if possible, heightened by the delicacy and generosity of feeling which her request evinced.

.. There was one other person, who was scarcely less distressed at this time than Louisa ; we

mean Lady Georgina Capel ; but though much concerned at the duel which had taken place, she had not so great a weight of sadness on her mind as the future Lady Iford.

Upon Lady Elizabeth's entering the drawing-room, when Hyde had shaken hands with her and departed on the day he left town, she found Georgina drowned in tears, and of course received a full confession of the attachment which subsisted between her and Mr. Nugent.

The penetrating eye of Lady Elizabeth had long before, however, made that discovery, but she good-naturedly allowed her sister to suppose that this was the first intimation of it she had received ; and with Georgina's beautiful head on her bosom, she administered such kind consolation, and encouraged such hope of their parents' approval of Hyde's addresses, as she thought she could with justice and truth permit her tongue to give birth to. She advised her sister to keep up her spirits, and even to attempt cheerfulness if she felt it not. There was, she

said, no occasion to show the world what was in reality the case, that her grief was caused by the departure of Mr. Nugent, and still less cause was there, while he was away, to distress and perplex her parents. They had, she said, seen several little instances of uncertainty of spirits, and a vacillating disposition in Mr. Nugent, and it would perhaps be as well to wait till he should have had a stronger trial before he was admitted as a declared suitor; or, at least, till a second meeting should have convinced her that he had not, during his absence from England, already changed his mind.

Of course Georgina protested against the possibility of such a thing; and, indeed, she but did Hyde justice. In her opinion, which she expressed to her sister, Hyde was a model of constancy, and the standard of manly excellence; and who is there that does not, or ought not, to think the same of the man she would marry? That his spirits were uneven she confessed, and feared that some weight un-

known to them might hang upon his mind ; but that he should so soon grow cold, or prove the fickle being that could forget the attachment between them in the short space he was to be absent, was a thing not to be heard of, much less regarded as a probability.

At dinner, according to her sister's advice, Lady Georgina endeavoured to appear composed, and as if nothing had happened. A month or six weeks duplicity, however, was a sad prospect for her. Oh, she felt she could never disguise the state of her feelings from parents who would have such constant opportunities of observing her : the effort she was sure would be vain, though she might hold out for a week, she thought, or perhaps ten days ; and as these thoughts passed and repassed over her mind, she was called on to help her father to a *pâté*.

"Ten?" she asked, as she had already put three in the plate.

"No, I thank you, one will be sufficient," said Lord Malmesbridge.

Georgina blushed at her own absence of mind, and became confused. Elizabeth looked wretched, for her love of her sister was excessive. Dinner was but half concluded, when Lord Malmesbridge began to talk of "his young friend Hyde Nugent," wondering how far he had got on his way to Plymouth, when Georgina, unable longer to command herself, burst into a flood of tears, and left the room.

It was that sudden swelling of the throat, that suffocating feeling which attacks us when we unexpectedly hear mentioned a subject on which the full soul requires but the slightest touch of but one string to open its flood-gates, that upset Georgina's composure. This was a short "ten days," indeed!

Fortunately her brothers dined out, and the servants, she hoped, were not aware of the cause of her agitation; but the truth could no longer be kept a secret from Lord and Lady Malmesbridge, who exchanged a peculiar sort of look on the occasion. Elizabeth left the

table, and followed her sister up-stairs. What very blind people parents are sometimes! and they pride themselves upon being so particularly clear-sighted all the while! They are almost always sure to suspect in the wrong place, nevertheless; particularly where there has been any attempt at concealment between the real parties. Now Lady Malmesbridge wished Lord Iford to marry Georgina, and Herbert was the only person she dreaded as a stumbling-block, thinking (why, we cannot tell) that her daughter had a partiality for the guardsman, which she tried to disguise from her.

The natures of Hyde and Georgina were neither of them naturally dissimulative; but from a fear on one side that his hopes were placed too high to succeed, joined to an inability to conquer his passion; and from a natural maiden modesty on the other party, joined to a dread of acknowledging that she felt an equal degree of passion to that evinced by her lover,—both, with a pardonable degree of reluct-

ance to come to a confession of the truth to their respective parents, or the parents of each other,—had completely concealed from those higher powers what now seemed to break upon them in all the undisguised soberness of truth.

By the bye, we cannot say that Lord Malmesbridge had not his suspicions on the subject; but if he had, he certainly never communicated them to his lady. The marchioness had beheld, with no small mortification, the failure of her plans with regard to Iford, for his proposal to Louisa Nugent was of course no longer a secret; but as the marquis was rather in the habit of ridiculing all husband-hunting schemes and manœuvrings, particularly where they had the misfortune to fail;—she, meditating a surprise to her lord, when she should have brought her plans to bear, had concealed from him, till, as she thought, certainty should have put it beyond the possibility of a disappointment, the clever machinations she had for some time been beguiling herself with. She was therefore free

from any apprehension that Lord Malmesbridge would reproach her with bad generalship, in addition to the accusation she felt she should deserve, of having neglected to keep asunder two young people, who, from being so much in each other's company, were but too liable to become attached. Then, she thought, what were Hyde's expectations? And in case Georgina's attachment to him was too strong to be overcome without much unhappiness, and despairing of ever being able, from her decided disposition, to bring about a match where high connections, more than wealth, or both combined, should be the object;—whether, finding all these things should ultimately prevent any other match, she and the marquis should give their consent to a union,—what were the advantages likely to accrue therefrom? Then came the Nugent property of seven thousand a-year, and the chance of Lady Wetherby's ten more, and his good family, &c. &c. &c.; his sister married to Lord Iford, whom she had fixed on for her

son-in-law;—ah! that was a thorn in her side!—heir to a dukedom, and sixty thousand a-year! And yet there was nothing to which she could object in Hyde, for he was a grand favourite with her ladyship; but she was a little annoyed that Hyde should have chosen to fall in love with her daughter, or rather, (for this she did not much care about,) that her daughter should have fallen in love with him! It was very provoking, certainly, *mais que peut-on faire?*

We must confess that the marchioness was somewhat worldly. We must also confess that Mrs. Nugent was as proportionably elated at the idea of her *grand succès* as Lady Malmesbridge was chagrined at her failure. Her ladyship, fearing that her plans might have been seen through in the great world, and determined to give “all uncharitableness” as small a handle as possible,—(for that lady, with her sisters, “envy, hatred, and malice,” pervade the very high circles of London, inveterate in a not less, though

perhaps in a more refined shape, than they do Cheltenham, Bath, and, in short, all petty country towns)—Lady Malmesbridge, we say, turned her thoughts towards the appearance of Georgina at a quadrille ball they were engaged to in Grosvenor-square that evening; and terrified lest she should not be able to appear on the very night that Iford's match would form a prominent feature in the sensible and charitable conversation,—a sort of analysis which she knew would ensue,—and if she had not sufficiently masked her batteries during the campaign, or rather, the siege of Iford,—poor Georgina, and what was worse, herself, would come in for a share of the “pulling to pieces,” as having failed in their attack upon the duke in perspective. She also dreaded that Georgina should have the pale countenance and *triste* look of a *bergère délaissée*, which, as the true cause could not be told, (being almost as bad as the supposed one would be) occasioned her ladyship, as soon as the dessert was placed on

the table, to leave the marquis to his meditations, which were very much upon a par with those of his *cara sposa*, at least as far as Hyde's prospects went.

The foregoing thoughts, which we have taken some time in detailing, ran through the marchioness's head with the rapidity of lightning; and most anxiously had she waited the withdrawing of the servants, that she might repair to Georgina's room; on entering which, she found her daughter lying on the bed, bathed in tears, and almost hysterical at the supposed conclusion her parents must have come to, upon the cause of the exhibition she had made at dinner, as she styled it. Lady Elizabeth was standing by the bed-side, administering sisterly consolation, mixed with hartshorn, sal volatile, and smelling salts, to which the marchioness wanted to add laudanum, but this Georgina would not hear of.

Lady Malmesbridge entreated her daughter, to control her agitation, pretended ignorance of

the cause, and attributed it to the heat of the weather, which was indeed insufferable. She particularly wished her, she said, to go to Lady * * * 's that evening, begged her to try and procure an hour's sleep, after which she would doubtless feel better,—and left her. Georgina, comforted by the idea that the true cause of her excitement of nerves was not suspected, became more composed, and succeeded in getting a little slumber. At ten she was awakened by her maid Greville, and arose unrefreshed ; and feeling that she would rather undertake a journey of a hundred miles than go to the party in Grosvenor-square, where she felt that her looks would betray the state of her mind, and dreaded the insinuations and false expressions of sympathy of the fair, with the more intolerable though well-meaning attentions of the other sex : for well she thought that Hyde's concern in the late duel, and departure from England, would be blazed over the world ; and from their having been seen much together in public, she feared

it was but too likely that her indisposition would be by them imputed to its right cause, though her parents, whom, however, she could not help suspecting, might still be in ignorance.

The first glance at her pale countenance in the glass told her that she looked too exhausted and wretched to think of going out. She sent Greville, therefore (infinitely sulky at having been locked out by Lady Elizabeth, when she came up on hearing of her lady's retiring from the dinner-table), to the marchioness to apprise her of her determination not to go to Lady * * * 's. This message, far from having the desired effect of bringing her mother over to her plans, only brought her over to her room, where Lady Malmesbridge made such good use of her time, that in five minutes her rhetoric, aided by the sweets of flattery as to looks, &c. persuaded Georgina that her own eyes must have deceived her, and the duties of the toilette were re-commenced. But Georgina was too sensible to be long the dupe of flattery. Be-

sides, she could not see what purpose there was to answer in taking her, half-dead, to a party. Was not Elizabeth enough to go? she should not herself be missed, &c. &c. Her toilette being completed, and her charms arrayed in the splendid dress that was thought fit for the daughter of a marquis even by her maid, (for she had told her to "dress her as she liked;" for, thought she, "there will be no one there I care about,") she could not conceal from herself that she looked pale and ill,—“a complete fright,”—“a very figure;” and her resolution was taken accordingly; which was, to confess the truth to her parents at once, and beg they would not oblige her to appear in society that evening, when she knew that her abstraction and lowness of spirits must strike every body, and betray the real state of her feelings.

After being condemned, therefore, to await the useless application of chains, bracelets, and clasps; having undergone all the extra torture of hair-dressing by a sulky Abigail, and received

her pocket-handkerchief, fan, and gloves from this same unwilling minister,—she descended to the drawing-room, where she found the marquis alone, waiting, during a patient perusal of the *Courier*, the dreaded event of being dragged to an evening party at midnight.

Georgina thought this was too favourable an opportunity to be missed, and interrupting her father while he was following some wise political inference which the *Courier* was drawing, reckless of the fate of nations while her own was undecided, she made the entreaty that she should not be obliged to go out that one evening.

The marquis laid down the paper, and taking her hand, said she should not go out for the remainder of the season, if she preferred staying at home.

Georgina tried to smile; and her father, whose penetrating eye told him all was not right, asked her seriously the cause of her agitation, or illness. This of course produced tears; she opened her heart to her kind parent, and

confessed the mutual attachment which subsisted between Mr. Nugent and herself. Her father kissed her pale forehead, and speaking to her in a consolatory tone, assured her she must be mistaken, and that her naturally strong feelings had heightened the regret they all felt at losing their young friend Hyde.

The carriage now drove up to the door, and Georgina became anxious, to a degree, that her mother should be informed of the true state of the case; and Lord Malmesbridge declared that if she felt unequal to the task, he would not allow the marchioness to take her out.

What a bold husband! Georgina could only look her gratitude.

The marchioness, when she entered in all her glittering paraphernalia, followed by Elizabeth, was informed by Lord Malmesbridge of the resolution Georgina had taken. She merely gave her daughter a look, expressive of something between anger and compassion, without speak-

ing ; but the good feeling at last prevailed, and she told the unhappy girl to go to bed, hoping she would have a good night's rest.

The marquis had long been thinking within himself that such an occurrence as the attachment of Hyde and his daughter was likely to take place. He was fond of our hero, his friendship for Mr. Nugent was very strong, and he was one of those few men who think their children's happiness less dependent upon a match of interest, as to wealth or high rank, than upon their own affections; he was, therefore, not averse to the connexion, if the young people should become really fond of each other, and had early determined not to thwart the inclinations of his sons or daughters, should they be reasonably directed : otherwise, as a man of high honour and kind feelings, he would never have permitted Hyde to be so often at his house, or have countenanced the young people's having so much of each other's society.

We cannot, however, quite acquit Lord

Malmesbridge of having, when left to enjoy his own company after dinner, discussed with his wine and dessert the *pros* and *cons* of a match between Hyde Nugent and Georgina. "But then they were so young!" thought he, "and young people are so apt to change their minds!" There he was wrong, for attachments formed when young last longer than any other.

Not to dwell longer, however, on this part of our history, we shall just mention that Lady Malmesbridge was apprized by her lord on that evening of the acknowledgment of Georgina; and it was concluded between them, that keeping their own counsel, while they gave some oral comfort to Georgina, they should wait the arrival of young Nugent from Portugal; and if he seemed still desirous of an union with their daughter, rather than break her heart, the match should be agreed to.

Poor Georgina! Many sighs and tears were her portion that night. Sighs for the absence of Hyde, and tears for the remorse she felt in

having formed an attachment without the knowledge of her parents, and by so doing, caused them, perhaps, much pain, and risked their displeasure; for whatever were the consolations they tendered her, joined to the sweet ministrings of her sister, she could not but be conscious that she had endeavoured to conceal from them the progress of her love from its infancy; nor could she long remain unpersuaded that, by their manner, they were as well aware of the present state of her heart, as they wished it to appear they were still doubting and unconvinced.

Lady Malmesbridge was too much a woman of the world not to know that dissipation is the best cure for love that ever was invented, and she therefore dragged Georgina to every party that was given, and gave several extra ones herself. But though Georgina had so far recovered her spirits, as not to appear melancholy or absurd in company, still her heart was far from being there; it was with Hyde on the deep of the Atlantic, or in Portugal, picturing

scenes to herself so different from what are always actually the case. She had no idea that Hyde and Burgoyne could have arrived at, and sailed from Plymouth with the expedition we have seen them use; and she therefore felt thankful, "on that night of stormy water," that he whom she loved best in the world was at least still secure from being tempest-tost. The bright beams of the next morning's sun, as they made their way through the dusky atmosphere of London, cheered her with the idea that they would also shine on the embarkation of three friends, who were in fact already more than a hundred miles on their voyage.

At all the parties she attended, Georgina was sure to be annoyed with the attentions of Wyndham Herbert, whose rival being now out of the way, he thought he might be able to administer such poison to her ear, that his reception, on returning from Portugal, would be any thing but flattering. But this was to be done without committing himself, and how did he

proceed in the praiseworthy undertaking? We shall see.

One night at Almack's, in pursuance of his design, this artful hypocrite, after a long conversation, in which he praised Nugent to the skies, contrived to let Lady Georgina know that our hero was nearly every night during his stay in town at a certain gaming-house in St. James's-street, where the sums of money that he lost were incredible ; that he had got into a bad set, not at all the better that there were one or two noblemen in it ; and that his affairs were come to such a crisis, that he had been advised by some of his friends to shirk off paying half the money he owed, threaten them with a prosecution if they insisted, and, as a *dernier ressort*, get a commission in some dragoon regiment. All this, however, Herbert said he had heard from Adonis Millefleurs, to whom Lady Georgina might refer for a corroboration of what he had told her, but begged she would not mention his name in the affair. As for him-

self, he had made a vow, when he first entered the guards, never to be seen in a place of the sort, and that therefore he could only speak on hearsay; and indeed he trusted, for the sake of his young friend, that the story had been exaggerated, or the report altogether groundless; yet he feared——he feared——

Lady Georgina would not believe it, she said; it was impossible, or she must have heard it from the ——, and here she stopped.

Herbert hoped it might not be true. He had only been induced to drop a hint of it to her ladyship, from the lively interest he knew she took in Mr. Nugent's welfare. He rather went too far there, for Georgina began to get angry at the impertinent insinuation his words conveyed. However, the captain continued, or rather ended, by saying that a few words of advice from the lips of a fair friend would have more effect in reclaiming Mr. Nugent from the destruction that awaited him, than volumes

of exhortation or remonstrance from one of the rougher sex.

This, as it was intended by its perpetrator, sunk deep into the breast of Georgina, and gave her heartfelt uneasiness, which, however, a few days put a period to; for meeting Adonis Millefleurs, she was gratuitously informed by him that Herbert had, during the last week, lost a considerable sum of money at the very house he had mentioned as the scene of Hyde's gambling transactions. Being thus convinced that Herbert had not spoken the truth as regarded himself, she determined to reject his evidence altogether; and though sure that Hyde must have been wronged by his report, she had some wish to hear Millefleurs's opinion of the story; but while she wavered between the desire of asking him, and the reluctance to do so, he was called away by Herbert, and a few days after had to join his regiment at Brighton, so that the opportunity, fortunately for our hero, was lost.

Here, then, had Herbert over-reached himself, as most machinators do, sooner or later ; and he consequently became more odious in the sight of Lady Georgina than ever ; and, as the guardsman retrograded in her good opinion, our hero advanced, perhaps much more than he deserved.

Herbert's visits at Malmesbridge House now became more frequent, notwithstanding the coldness with which Lady Georgina received him, and the pertinacity with which she persisted in sending the marchioness to him, whenever he happened to surprise her alone, and notwithstanding the stiffness with which Lady Malmesbridge invariably made herself disagreeable, whenever she had to endure him for a quarter of an hour.

CHAP. II.

A letter from my lord ?

Oh, learn'd indeed were that astronomer,
That knew the stars as I his characters !

SHAKSPEARE.

HYDE, we have said, considering himself a thorough-bred sailor, having made two voyages, had effected a landing, through surf and through rain, in the most gallant manner, under the batteries at Portsmouth. He had, however, been nursed too long in the lap of luxury to acquire that degree of nautical hardiness with which Neptune invests his sons ; and, perhaps

jealous of the attributes which this landsman wished to arrogate to himself, the sea-god gave him an extra sprinkling in his way on shore. Whether such were the case or not, he caught so violent a cold, followed quickly by fever soon after his landing, that he was obliged to defer his intended journey to town, and take up his quarters at the George, where he was detained a fortnight before the attending physician pronounced him well enough to travel.

In the mean time, he wrote to and received letters from his father, and obtained a full account of the wedding of his sister with Lord Iford. It had been the first thing which struck his eye upon taking up a newspaper, the day he debarked from the Arethusa. Under the head of "Marriage in High Life," in the Morning Post, it was stated, that at St. George's, Hanover-square, "The Earl of Iford had led to the altar the lovely and accomplished daughter of Henry Nugent, Esq., of Nugent Hall, in the county of ———, and of Cavendish-square,

London, &c. &c. The happy pair," it said, "had set off after the wedding for Blore Abbey, a seat of the bridegroom's father, who, with his amiable duchess, had assisted at the ceremony, and remained at their house in St. James's-square." This gave great joy to Hyde, as he was sure his sister would be happy; though, while he put down the paper, his heart heaved an involuntary sigh at the thoughts of what his poor friend Burgoyne must suffer when this paragraph should meet his eye.

During his convalescence, young Nugent wrote to Lady Georgina Capel, whose image never had been absent from his mind; and now, away from the bustle and noise of a ship, left to the dulness of solitude and silence, uninterrupted save by one or two visits from Mr. Lisle and some of the officers of the *Arethusa*, how vividly did the recollection of her strike upon his imagination! and how fervently did he wish for the restoration of his health that he might reach town before the Malmesbridges left

it! But this was a vain hope ; however, he comforted himself with the recollection of the invitation to Knorridge Park, which the marquis had given him at parting ; and thinking he could no better solace himself in his absence from Lady Georgina, he assumed his pen and ink, and despatched a letter, the contents of which may be as well imagined as described. The generous heart of that lady would not permit such an effusion of true love to go unanswered ; and communicating to her parents that she had heard from Mr. Nugent, she, by return of post, sent him an answer. The receipt of this letter made the heart of Nugent dance for joy. “ Was it possible,” he exclaimed, when left alone, after the letter directed in her dear hand had been presented by the servant,—“ was it possible that he, unworthy as he deemed himself, should have the exquisite pleasure of receiving a letter from the beautiful, the lovely Lady Georgina Capel ?” His breakfast was sent away nearly untouched ; that morning he devoted to more

intellectual food. Again and again did he examine the seal and the post-mark. By the latter, he observed they were still in town ; the former bore her own name. " Friendly, at least," thought he ; and as he opened it, and read over and over the treasured manuscript, his soul overflowed at the kindness, the modest, virtuous, and true attachment, which shone through every line. He was more than blessed.

It was just as the Malmesbridges were about to leave town that Hyde's letter arrived. The season in fact was over ; the marquis's house was next day closed till parliament should again meet, and Cavendish-square knew the Nugents no more.

The day before their departure, Lord Malmesbridge and Georgina had a very interesting *tête-à-tête*, the outlines of which, since these things have now gone by, we may be pardoned if we disclose.

The conversation was elicited by Hyde's letter, which had just made its appearance ; and

the marquis, in giving his consent to his daughter's answering it, told her that he had asked Hyde down to Knorridge, where they would have an opportunity of seeing more of him than they could possibly do in town.

“To me,” said the marquis, “he appears all that I could wish; but your mother and I think that not only ourselves, but you, my Georgina! should see more of him, before you consent to such an awful step; for awful it is, and ought so to be considered, notwithstanding the lightness with which it may be talked of, and the giddy and thoughtless estimation in which it is the fashion to hold it at the present day. But I am not going to give you a preachment on the subject: I know I can depend on your prudence and strength of mind; and therefore, should he prove worthy of you, and Mr. Nugent choose to make him what I consider a fair settlement, while you tell me truly and honourably that your happiness stands or falls as this union takes place, or the contrary, — I will throw

no obstacles in the way: I will sacrifice all claim to rank or honours, which you might reasonably expect at your age and as my daughter, independent of your merit or what not,—my own little girl will not be vain if I say, beauty, I am sure,” added the Marquis, throwing his arm round her slender waist;—“I say, that I am willing, Georgy! to sacrifice all these to your happiness, if it really and truly is at stake; therefore you have only yourself to blame should you be disappointed.” Georgina threw herself into her father’s arms, and wept. She would forfeit all claims to her parents’ love, she said, if Hyde did not prove all she or her family could wish.

Our hero, as soon as the medical gentleman pronounced him able to travel, proceeded to town with all the despatch that a post-chaise and four could make, but every one that he now cared about had left the mighty Babylon. How different did it not appear, as, the day after his arrival at Long’s, he strolled out to

~~Chivers~~ places, preparing for a sojourn in the country, and equipping himself accordingly ! There were the locks of his gun to be seen about, and in fact ordered home that night, and the gun itself from Manton's : there were his pistols, which had been sent to Egg's to get something done to them on the morning of the duel, after his return : they had not been used since Birstal's affair at Oxford. He should never want *them* again, he hoped ; however it was as well to have them with him. Then there were shooting-jackets to order, and leggings, and water-proof shoes, and powder and shot, for there was capital shooting about Knorridge. There would also be early hunting while he was there : he must have new red coats built, and some half-dozen pair of top-boots must be ordered, the toes of those he had being too pointed, and a silk hat ; (no one can hunt in any thing but a silk hat ;) and then, as he went along, how he laughed at " all those villainous chequed neckcloths " in the windows !

nobody thought of hunting in any thing but white now.

But how different, we say, (we are always saying, "we say," by the bye, though Blair tells us it is decidedly wrong)—but how different did not London appear on this day, from the scene it presented when our hero left it for Portugal ! Then it was fuller than full ; now it was melancholy, half-deserted, shorn of its beams ; the principal ornaments gone which lately dazzled the world, and the great gloomy town showing like the staff of a fire-work, its brilliant but evanescent coruscations fled, and nothing appearing but the wood-work in all its original dulness. He walked to Cavendish-square, but nothing that claimed his family as masters, or bore the name of Nugent, met his eye, save a letter from his father, hurrying him to the country. He walked down past Malmesbridge House, but the windows were all closed, and the shutters, with their gilded beading, told a melancholy tale of desertion by the fair and

noble, whom they so lately enclosed, but whose forms they would not again confess the presence of, till another year had thrust forward his first three dreary months.

“Happy, happy hours that I have spent within those walls!” thought Hyde, as he turned away with a sigh from their momentary contemplation, and his eyes rested for one little second on the broad flag-stone at the door, over which Georgina must have passed to step into the carriage. And then, as he strolled up — street on his way back to Long’s, he thought of the parties and the gaiety she must have indulged in during his absence, and his heart for the first time felt a twinge of unreasonable jealousy.

He had letters to write to Burgoyne and Bridgewater; and having sealed the first, and directed the last, he recollected the miniature, and away he flew with it to Curzon-street, hoping to find the Montagues still in town, which by great good luck they were. However,

there was such a host of cousins, brothers, and sisters in the room, that he despaired of being able to deliver it; and having given them an account of his voyage, and Bridgewater, whom they were all very anxious about, he found his visit approaching to a visitation, without the slightest chance appearing of the young and old (for there were two Scotch aunts in the case) being about to make him feel *les ennuis de l'absence*, and thus giving him an opportunity of slipping into the fair hands of its intended possessor the *portrait charmant*.

At length, seeing a little boy of about six years old sitting next *la belle Julie* at the table, scribbling with a pencil on paper, he asked if he should draw him a ship,—Captain Bridgewater's pretty ship. "Oh, yes!" said the delighted child, "but I'll get you another bit of paper, for this is the king's new palace I have been drawing. You mustn't spoil *this*."

"Oh," said the ruthless Hyde, "that will do famously," and he tore the king's palace in two, and

wrote on the kitchen chimney, "I will leave something for you at ***'s, the jeweller's, this afternoon: call for it *yourself, et soyez sage!*" He then covered it over with the other half of the child's drawing, and began to portray a ship, which might have been taken either for that, or the York waggon. This did not, however, stop the flood of tears which the poor child was shedding at the destruction of the new palace. His look, when Hyde first tore it, not knowing whether to cry or let it alone, was worth the whole of the Somerset House Exhibition. Hyde had just about as much idea of drawing a ship as he had of making a watch; however, he began scribbling again, for he found his work only half done; and that to get an opportunity of slipping the kitchen chimney into the fair hand of Julia Montague, he must engage the attention of all the rest about something else. What *should* he do? He had it. A bright idea! for it was the idea of a gold chain, which was, with other dandy trumpery, twisted round his neck. He

took it off, and flung it on the table to a distance from where Julia was; and making her a sign of attention, he said to the others, "There, what do you think of the Lisbon goldsmiths, who can make six yards of chain out of half a sovereign?" The chain was made out of two guineas, *mais n'importe*: the *ruse* answered the purpose; for amidst the cries of "where?" "oh, dear me!" "how pretty!" "how ingenious!" &c. which ensued, our hero pushed half the king's palace over to Julia, and taking his hat, wished them all good morning, making a present of the beautiful Lisbon chain to the little artist, to make amends for the ruin of his sketch. Hyde beat a speedy retreat, Julia Montague following him with one end of the chain, (for the boy seemed fully to comprehend the law of possession, and retained the other,) protesting that it was much too valuable a present; but Hyde merely gave her hand a gentle squeeze for Bridgewater, as they were now *tête-à-tête* on the stairs, which called forth

such a rosy blush, that our hero said she looked as beautiful as Aurora, and jumped down stairs, particularly pleased with his success. He feared lest the other girls might come out, or he would then have delivered the little parcel, which he left that evening at the jeweller's with particular directions, and the next day started for Nugent Hall.

What! you will say, and without visiting St. James's-street; or Adonis and his gang? Yes, reader, and shall we tell you why? Because he had determined upon going there all the way up from Portsmouth. He was, however, that evening too tired, and was resolved to remain another day in town for the purpose, so he went to Nugent Hall next morning.

We forgot to mention that the friends of the unfortunate Shallowner had dropped all intentions of proceeding against Burgoyne and Nugent. The evidence of Birstal, and a country-man who was near, (for the surgeon declined giving evidence, except as a professional man)

on the coroner's inquest, cleared the parties of any imputation of unfairness; and it was agreed by all that the unhappy affair should be for ever buried in oblivion.

Hyde Nugent had, it must be allowed, encountered some few crosses and unpleasant things, though we have now got him again into a fair way, but he had escaped a snare he little dreamed of. It was briefly this. On the first renewal of his acquaintance with Millefleurs, that brilliant character, with Hoesht, and one or two others, (not Gardner or Cumberland, for they were themselves most preciously "done,") had laid a deep plan for plucking the young Oxford pigeon; but they found he had some foolish scruples to be overcome about play, &c. and they thought, by dosing him with champagne, and getting him into a regular gambling-house, they would have won half the battle, and therefore left this part of the business to men of whom Hyde could not have any suspicion; from the company they were at the time with: these

men were to be Adonis and the baron ; and the officers, with a really gentleman-like man or two that Hyde met for the first few nights, were to act as decoy ducks, themselves unconscious, being plucked the while. The baron was a deep file on these points, and had assisted in the ruin of not a few. How well their first endeavours succeeded we have already seen ; but though they had gained half the battle, it was *but* half. Their main object was to lure him into a system of private play at their own houses, or at that of some other man who was to be well paid for the use of it, while the workmen were to ply their vocation till “night’s candles were burnt out,” and send their bird forth light as “the feather’d Mercury,” though somewhat less merry than the lark. Their plan, however, failed ; for the very night which was to have seen it put in execution, when it was known that the day before he had got a fresh supply of cash from a Jew ;—the challenge came from Birstal, and the quarrel took place between Burgoyne and Shal-

lowner, or he would most probably have fallen into the snare, and not only have lost all the ready money he possessed, but have got dipped some thousands deeper than there was the slightest chance of his being able to pay. Out of evil, therefore, sprang good, in this instance.

The only other people of his acquaintance besides the Montagues, that he met in town before he went down to the Hall, were Lady Wetherby with George Maskwell, and Wyndham Herbert, who was on guard at St. James's. Our hero was walking on the shady side of Pall-Mall, and the *militaire* on the sunny one: they did not therefore communicate. Lady Wetherby and George were in her Ladyship's old travelling rattle-trap, which, as it appeared from the accumulated dust, was just arriving in town, as every body else was leaving, or had left it. She had, perhaps, an idea that every thing was now cheaper in the metropolis than in the country, since the fashionable herd had made its exit. Lady Wetherby stopped the ponderous

vehicle to speak to our hero, though she was not particularly gracious ; since she had heard of his duel and expulsion from Oxford, with one or two other wild tricks which had come to her knowledge, not without sundry additions and embellishments. She, in fact, began to row him in the street, which Hyde, thinking rather too much of a good thing, cut short by making his bow, and walking off. Her ladyship gave her head a toss, and ordered the coachman to proceed,—a command which it was much easier to give than to execute ; for the tired jades, having once stopped, were not, without much labour, equal to again rousing the caravan into action. Flogging carried the day, however, and the old epigram was here verified *à la lettre*,—

If all be true that people say,

It costs you more in whips than hay.

CHAP. III.

All seasons and their change,—all please alike.
 Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
 When first on *this delightful land* he spreads
 His orient beams; on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
 Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
 After soft showers.

MILTON.

HYDE had not now been at the Hall for two years; it was, therefore, with a peculiar feeling, a feeling of mingled pleasure and melancholy, that he now drove up the approach, and surveyed the well-remembered scenes of his child-

hood. A sigh escaped him as he thought of the true and unstained happiness, though so little prized, which he then enjoyed, and compared it with the less unsophisticated feelings with which an intercourse with the world had possessed him ; — ~~the~~ horrid world, that destroys all our innocence and happiness, opens our eyes, and draws the curtain from a mass of vice and villany, of which our before imperfect vision was unconscious.

Perhaps, also, a thought of Augusta St. Quentin crossed his mind, whom he recollected as constituting, in his estimation, at that time, the chief ornament of whatever part of the grounds her fairy form was seen upon—"The Flower of Dane's Court."

An anxiety to know if the St. Quentins were at home, prompted him to stop before he got up to the house, and ask the question of one of the daughters of the lodge-keeper, whom he overtook. She told him, after several "lawks-

a-mercy, if it isn't Master Hyde!" that the family had been away from Dane's Court all the summer, that is for the last two or three months, she believed; but she seldom went over there, as she was afraid of the great dog. But folks said as how they would not be back for some time, because Miss Augusta was took so ill like.

Hyde scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry at their absence; but he was at the door of Nugent Hall before he had much farther time to ruminate.

Pass we over the meeting, the explanations, the joys, the regrets, and the *tête-à-tête* after dinner, which Hyde could scarcely be said to enjoy with his father, inasmuch as there were some pecuniary subjects started; and to answer these went to the very quick. Truly, he could not reply to them, or all would be discovered; he was therefore obliged to use concealment, at least for a time, since he had resolved to

confess himself to his father; but the evil day must be put off, or the expedition to Knorridge would be defeated, or robbed of its joys.

These things we must pass over lightly, and present the trio to the reader as they appeared next morning in the old wainscotted breakfast-room, hung round with blue, or peach-coloured velvet-coated Nugents, in gilt frames, ancient and quaintly carved, with their beautiful, though not less stiff ladies.

The descendants of these respectable personages were seated at the well-covered table with its rich damask cloth, its appropriate old-fashioned silver urn and coffee-pot, its ancient set of breakfast china, its elegant butter-coolers, its plentiful supply of hot rolls, toast, eggs, and honey, that might have vied with that of Hymettus. Forget we not the side-board in perspective, furnished with pigeon-pie, and other cold viands, nor the brilliancy of the day, and the time of year; and let us pronounce the Nugents to have been surrounded by all the com-

forts of an English breakfast. It was August; the open window permitted the eye to wander over the beautiful sunny prospect of fields, woods, and hills; the corn in some places cut and piled in sheaves upon the ground, in others waving gently to the light breeze; while here and there was seen a bend of the river as it wound through the vale beneath, giving to the gladdened vision a specimen of the romantic, peaceful beauty of lovely, dear England, which only those who have seen other countries can properly appreciate. They may talk of their "climes of the East," and their "lands of the sun,"

Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever
shine;

we like not such a monotonous, evergreen, blazing country: a little variety has its charm; and let the thankful English heart praise its Maker, who has beneficently placed the possessor in a climate equally remote from extremes

of any kind ; untorn by hurricanes, unmoved by earthquakes, girt by a natural barrier, and peopled with the fairest of the fair, and the bravest of the brave.

Mrs. Nugent, perhaps, not sufficiently alive to sentiments of this nature, (for she had never been abroad) was pouring out the fragrant Chinese essence, which mixed its odour with the flowery perfume of a jessamine hedge in the neighbouring garden, while the singing of the tea-urn was mingled with the song of many birds, revelling in the groves of Nugent, or the occasional hum of a wandering bee,—when the door opened, and a servant entered with the letters and newspapers.

There is something truly delightful in a country breakfast, with all these *aides*, especially after being immured in smoky London for some three or four months, with nothing but the sight of black and stunted trees, if you have any attached to the place called a garden ; not to mention the incessant sound of coaches, or an

itinerant organ, mingled with various appalling cries. A country breakfast is scarcely less cheerful in the winter either, when we advance towards a blazing fire to warm our fingers, and see a set of happy countenances radiant with health and beauty, or expressive of hungry anticipation at the sight of all the good things on the well-spread table. Perhaps also we may see a scarlet coat or two, if early people, and there be no frost.

A letter, franked by Lord Iford, was the first that presented itself; and tossing the *Morning Chronicle* to Hyde, who would have preferred the *Morning Post*, had there been any one in town,—he opened his dispatch, which proved to be from his noble son-in-law, containing a letter from Louisa to her mother.

“An invitation to Blore for us all!” said Mr. Nugent, when he had perused his letter.

Hyde dropped his newspaper, and looked uncommonly blank. He had as yet got no renewal of the invitation to Knorrledge. What

should he do? He would be obliged to go to the duke's with his father and mother, when he would have by far preferred patronizing the marquis without them.

"Iford writes very cheerfully, and says there is to be a large party there," proceeded Mr. Nugent: "why, Hyde, what is the matter? do you not like the idea of going to Blore Abbey?"

"Yes sir, but——"

"But what?"

"I —— that is, I shall not be able to go, I am afraid."

"Oh, if you have any particular reason, I do not wish to force you. But I can only say there is a great nianny there, a Miss Dacres."

"The sister of Sir Perceval Dacres, who broke his neck with the Quorn hounds last season?"

"The same," replied his father.

"And, rather a rare thing in an heiress," said Mrs. Nugent, "she is reckoned very pretty.

She succeeded to twelve thousand a-year at the death of her brother; but she was so afflicted at the event, that she has never appeared in public since."

"But you must pick up your good looks again, Master Hyde!" said his father, "or you will never pick up an heiress."

Hyde protested, with a smile, that he was no fortune-hunter, and cared not about heiresses or looks.

"What does Louisa say?" asked Mr. Nugent of his wife.

"She writes very pleasantly," replied that lady: "her new father and mother, the duke and duchess, she says, seem endeavouring to vie with the old ones in kindness and love. Not so very old either!" added she, with a smile. "Iford is tenderness itself, and all that heart can wish. Indeed, he ought to be, when he has got such a treasure. In short, she says nothing is wanting to complete their happiness, but our presence. There, you may read it."

"They will not have our presence till the harvest is in, I can tell them," said Mr. Nugent, as he opened the letter, and began to read: "Oh, I see the Malmesbridges are to be there!"

Hyde was crimson, and breathless.

"Why, you did not tell me of this?" continued Mr. Nugent.

"I wished to keep it *perdue*," replied his lady, casting an arch look at her son: "I wished to conceal it, since Hyde cannot go."

Mr. and Mrs. Nugent, between whom there seemed to be a sort of secret intelligence, looked at each other, and smiled.

"I suppose you will be able to go now, Hyde?" observed his mother.

Hyde laughed, and seeing he was found out, and that his parents were not ignorant of the state of his heart, declared he would endeavour to accompany them to Blore Abbey.

"Oh, no! Pray do not offer any violence to your feelings; do not force your inclinations."

We can go without you very well, and I will make your excuses to the duke."

Hyde, however, decided upon going; and, breakfast over, he strolled out in the grounds, while Mr. Nugent, a prodigious farmer, sallied forth to superintend reaping and carrying the corn, as if it could not have been done without him! But, however, it was his own place, and it would be rather hard not to allow him the pleasure of "playing at farmers."

"An abominable bore!" said Hyde, as he took his hat. "Found out. Wonder how they got hold of it!" And he determined to make a virtue of necessity, and inform his parents of the attachment which subsisted between Lady Georgina Capel and himself, hoping that they might only as yet suspect.

Rambling, he wist not where, the house of Dane's Court, with its numerous windows and chimneys, and its broad gravel circumbendibus before the door, the end of the approach, pre-

sented itself to his view ; and being now near the boundaries of the Nugent Hall demesne, he bent his steps towards the former place. He should take a sort of pleasure, he thought, in roaming through haunts as well known to him as to the St. Quentins.

A few minutes' walk brought him to the partition, which was a broad and rather high sort of dyke with a screen of trees and underwood. Along this bank there was a devious foot-path, where at your feet, in their proper season, peeped the violet and primrose : fox-glove and hemlock, however, had now undisturbed possession, disputed only by the glittering snake, which rapidly retreated at the approach of Hyde. Our hero leaped the wide ditch on the other side, not taking the trouble to seek the little gate at the end ; and crossing a few fields, found himself close to the house.

The old gardener was glad to see him ; and in fact so very polite was he, that Nugent, obliged to seek a retreat from his attentions,

entered the library, the windows of which were opened to admit the warm sunny air.

He heard a sorrowful tale from the old servants of their poor young lady's illness, the cause of which nobody could discover; but they hoped to see her return from Brighton, where she now was with the family, quite restored to health. The housekeeper had recently received a letter from Lady Caroline, telling her of their having left Cheltenham, and that they were not as yet to be expected back, as they found the sea air agreed with Miss St. Quentin. Left to himself in the library, Hyde, with a pleasure which all must have felt, though it is rather indefinable, recognised books which had once been his favourite studies, and drawings of Augusta's, which with a deplorable pencil he had tried to imitate, or rather caricature. There was a sketch-book amongst other things heedlessly thrown by, which had been once Louisa's, but he recollected Augusta having asked it as a present, on account of its containing a beautiful

drawing of the lake and waterfall in the grounds of Nugent Hall. What was his surprise when, on turning over the leaf, he perceived, but imperfectly rubbed out,—we will not be so unfair upon the absent Augusta as to disclose the exact secret; but let it suffice that, from a few words which so unexpectedly met the eyes of Hyde, he could not avoid feeling that he was held in the estimation almost of a worshipped one. There was a date just legible; for the pencil had been so hard, that all the India rubber in England would not have completely effaced its marks. He charged his memory with the day; it was that on which he left home for Oxford, now nearly two years since. A light seemed to break on him. Is it possible, thought he, that such should be the case? Could she really have taken his foolish attentions as any thing more than boyish absurdity? Conscience whispered him that he was a villain. There were speculations upon his return, his promised return, in those few lines. He tore the leaf

out, and destroyed it. Bitter were the reflections which ensued; and he hurried to escape from a house, of which every room, every reality, served to remind him of deeds done and words spoken, which, however insignificant at the time, now rushed upon his recollection with all the vividness of forcible truth.

As he crossed a field on his return, a bay horse, whose great beauty could not be disguised by his present shaggy, untrimmed appearance, approached the intruder, snorting and pricking up his ears. Hyde easily recognised the favourite Whisker, so great a pet with his fond mistress, and held out his hand to induce a nearer approach; but the horse, grown wild at grass, or suspecting a snare, turned suddenly round, and flung out a kick, which might have proved fatal to a less active person; as it was, Hyde only escaped by a few inches. The incident, however trivial, was not without its effect.

The lake and wood were visited on returning to his father's grounds ; and here fresh reminiscences of his earlier years came thick and fast upon his mind. On a sycamore near the cascade appeared the name of Augusta, cut by himself ; and, though mossed over in some parts, the letters had so spread with the tree's growth, that they were but too palpable. Not to every casual passer-by, however, was this discernible ; for the tree was partly hid by others, and a projection of the romantic bank ; but Hyde knew every pleasant place, and secret nook and dell of this fairy spot. The day was sultry ; and the noon-day sun, riding high, struck down its glaring beams upon the water, and forced young Nugent to seek a cooler retreat. He penetrated into the deep wood, and here again his eyes encountered another monument of boyish rhapsody, in an extract from Seneca, which an unusual ultra-scholastic fit had prompted him to chisel out upon the face of a rock during his latest Westminster holydays. It was this :—

Illæ proceritas sylvæ, et secretum loci, et admiratio umbræ, fidem numinis facit.

And whom did he constitute the deity, the dryad, which bestowed her tutelage upon the place?—whose was the form on which his mind's eye rested, while, like Old Mortality, he was thus employed? Whose but Augusta's?

And as he here lay on the dry moss and velvet turf, how bitterly did he repent the thoughtlessness of his former conduct! The evidences of his infidelity were before his eyes, the noise of the waterfall came floating on the breeze, and struck his ears with its melancholy sound, telling its tale of former days.

Here he might in truth be said to “chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy;” but the reproaches of his conscience divested of their delight the thoughts and recollections which had otherwise been sweet—how sweet, those can tell who have, after some years of absence, revisited the haunts of their childhood.

But ideas of Lady Georgina Capel now mingled with those of Augusta: she too had last year blessed these groves with her presence; perhaps her foot had trod upon that very spot. She was now the dryad of his imagination. What conflicting thoughts were Hyde's! He had entangled himself in a web of no ordinary intricacy, and from which he feared much difficulty would attend his retreat with honour; but Lady Georgina he had sworn fealty to, and he was determined no other should ever usurp her place. For he thought not that the usurpation was on her ladyship's part; and that she, who had the best right to be his bosom's sovereign, was the first to whom he had breathed the warm, though deceiving language which had caused such pain in her young heart;—a language which, if not precisely and literally that of love, was of such a species, and accompanied by those attentions, which could only be interpreted one way by any woman: with what force, then, were they not to be taken by one of

Augusta's high sensibility, at an age when all impressions of the mind remain as they are received, indelible and for life?

He rose and bent his steps homeward, trying to console himself with the thoughts of never having told Augusta that he loved her. He could not but admit that he had paid her too much court, but they were only boyish attentions : she could not have been so absurd as to take them earnestly ! There had been no love on his part ; he merely chose her for a companion, because she was the pleasantest, as well as the prettiest and nearest neighbour he had.

Hollow, hollow sophistry ! Could this ease his conscience from the feeling, which must every day increase, of having deceived a beautiful and innocent girl into the idea of being beloved ? Would this drive back the persevering devil of his thoughts, the never-to-be defeated truth, which sometimes shows itself in demon shape, that would, in spite of self, continually flash upon his mind, and might at length,

perhaps with the same or a fiercer degree of strength than had visited his victim, stamp its fire upon his heart, and seat itself upon his brain? Horrid thought!

Returning to the house in no enviable state of mind, he inquired of his mother if she had heard any thing of the St. Quentins lately. The answer gave him nearly the same intelligence as that of the housekeeper at Dane's Court. The family was at Brighton; and though, as Lady Caroline's last letter specified, Augusta's health in some slight degree improved by the change of air, it was much to be feared that she was going fast into a decline.

This melancholy piece of information confirmed Hyde in the fearful supposition which had that morning struck him; and we must do him the justice to say, that all feeling of vanity was swallowed up in regret for the unhappiness he had so thoughtlessly created, the desolation he had caused in her before gay and sorrowless heart. Indeed, he would have been a mere sa-

vage had he entertained any other emotions, or ideas.

Meantime the Malmesbridges were at Knorridge Park, where they had not long gladdened the neighbourhood by their presence, before an invitation arrived from Blöre Abbey, to meet the Duke of * * *, Lord Modbury, the Nugents, and some other people. It was accepted, and proved not an unpleasing circumstance to Lady Georgina Capel. Neither was the marquis sorry to abandon his intention of asking the Nugents over to Knorridge, as an opportunity now presented itself of seeing more of Hyde, with less appearance of being "particular," than Lord Malmesbridge thought might have attended his first plan.

The first week of the Capels' translation from London to the country appeared to Georgina worse than dull; it was awful.

Although surrounded by an affectionate family, in a magnificent house, where every comfort, every luxury was present, with all the

accompaniments of books, music, sensible conversation, walks and rides, the view of a beautiful country, and the means whereby she might enjoy the whole, we mean health,—still there was something wanting to make her life any thing but the dull void it appeared, and that something was the presence of him whom she prized beyond all the world besides. *Bleu vivoit tristement dans ce beau lieu.*

The anxiety she had undergone in his absence (the insinuations of the artful Herbert once discarded) caused the beloved object but to shine with greater brightness in her estimation; and the apprehension that some secret unhappiness weighed upon his mind, excited, if possible, a tenfold degree of interest for him than she had dared to trust her heart to acknowledge while they were almost in daily intercourse in town. However, she felt it to be her duty to exert the mind, and “take the good the gods provide,” in the refreshing country air and exercise, which the rides in the neighbour-

hood offered. By this she kept herself in health and looks; the latter of no small moment to a lady at any time; of how much then, when she is about to meet her lover! nay, almost her affianced husband! However, had she taken the trouble to keep a journal, we fear it might truly have been entitled "The Diary of an Ennuyée."

Let us now ask how the St. Quintins have fared, and what have been their amusements, or *passe-temps* at that celebrated watering-place, which, during the bathing season, is like one of the scenes in the Tempest, "a naked part of the isle."

But we have already run too far with this chapter, and shall not inquire whether the St. Quintins took their dips or not: we hope they did, as it is at the same time a healthy and an agreeable recreation.

At Brighton, they had not long sojourned before they renewed their acquaintance with Adonis Millefleurs, little suspecting that the beau-

tiful boy, whom they had known during his Westminster holydays at Nugent Hall, had since become such a thorough *roué*. He was now on his good behaviour, however, at least in comparison with what he had been in town; and Colonel * * * kept him rather closer under his eye than the former commanding officer used: for they had lately had a change in the —th; and although Adonis was the same fashionable ruffian as ever, still you saw little else in him but an almost bearable rattle, *chose qui plait aux femmes*, and of which you find so much at every watering-place, though Augusta had little relish for his conversation. She, however, tolerated him; the rather, that he declared himself the sworn friend of all the Nugents, and especially of Hyde. But she thought Hyde must be strangely altered if he could be fond of such society as that of Millefleurs *now*, or if he entered into his ideas of the method of enjoying life; for Adonis still spoke what he thought, or rather what he chose to speak. From him, however,

Augusta learned the account of all Hyde's late adventures, with the comfortable addition, that he was paying the greatest attentions to Lady Georgina Capel; "but she was given to Lord Iford by the *grand monde*," said Millefleurs, "who always make rank carry the day; and this I should have taken to be the case; for my friend Nugent is by no means likely to be so well off as people think; and, *entre nous*, he is something of the weathercock species; but I was told by somebody, (you know they will whisper those things sometimes) that Iford was about to throw himself at the feet of Louisa Nugent."

"He has already proposed, and the match is to take place," said Augusta: "I heard from Miss Nugent this morning."

Millefleurs was rather annoyed at finding his intelligence so stale. This conversation took place a day or two after his arrival at Brighton, upon his first meeting the St. Quentins on the Steyne; and although it was well known in town that Lord Iford was to lead the beautiful

Miss Nugent to the altar, Adonis thought the natives at Brighton must be still ignorant of the report; and wished to arrogate a degree of credit to himself, in the signs of prescience which distinguished his information with regard to all such events as matches in high life. He now tried to recover.

“Ha! I am glad to hear it is certain,” said he, with a careless air; “for, let me see, I have been three days out of the world, and you know it might have been all off again; for one hears of a match as about to take place one day, and the next day one hears that it was all false. In fact, there is never any reliance to be placed in these reports till you see the affair in print; and if I was going to be married, (which the Lord forbid!) I wouldn’t make sure of it myself till I had placed the ring on my wife’s finger.”

He then ran on with an account of London intrigues, matches upon the *tapis*, elopements, operas, &c. &c. &c.

“ And Mr. Nugent ? ” said Augusta, at length summoning courage to pronounce his name “ did you not say he — that ^{is}, Lady Georgi Capel — I mean, that they — ”

“ Were to be married ? ” said Millefeu “ Nay, you shall pardon me, fair lady ! you must not give me as your authority for that not that I care. But seriously I do not believe it is more than one of Hyde’s flirtations, which I fancy he has about half-a-dozen in hand. He is rather a gay deceiver, you know it is said ; for I heard a report of some girl in the country, I forget whom, that he pretended to be dying for, till he came up to town, and then, ha, ha, ha, he forgot her and all the country lasses. And besides, he is such a good looking fellow, that all the women, from fifteen to fifty, are running after him ; ay, from little Miss Darrell, to great, fat Lady Luxury. Poor Hyde ! I was rather in the good books of the former,” continued this *gentil housard*, as he let down his sword, and took up his *sabretache*

from whence to extract an embroidered pocket-handkerchief, scented with his namesake, for he was now "doing dandy;" and as he again let fall the *sabretache* to bang against his left leg, while the sword resumed its place under his arm, he went on with a careless story, true or untrue he cared not, of Hyde Nugent, without perceiving that every word went like a dagger to the heart of Augusta. "I was rather in the good books of the former, but confound my ill luck! a thick fog came over the metropolis at the time I was going home from a party where I had sat next her at supper, and said innumerable sweet things; and an ugly old house-maid had placed her pail in the middle of the pavement; when I, rather mystified with love ——"

"Or champagne," said a brother officer, who was attending Lady Caroline on the other side.

"—— and the fog," continued Adonis, not attending to the remark, "I was floored, and knocked out one of my teeth, as you perceive; and Hyde steps into my place, and now

it's a toss up between her and Georgy Cape who gets him."

This narrative, though mostly untrue, had a greater effect than the speaker looked for: indeed Millefleurs was not a malignant liar, as Herbert was, and would rather have spared a woman's feelings than wounded them, provided she had not offended him, for then his lash was as severe in the drawing-room as his horses found it in the barouche; but he had no idea that Miss St. Quentin was the identical "country-girl" he had by some means heard of Hyde's having once been attached to, and he was therefore ignorant of the pain he gave.

Augusta had heard enough to convince her that Hyde was the most contemptible of men, and she resolved to condemn him; but alas! it is a resolution much more easily made than carried into effect. She might be jealous, angry, maddened; but where true love has once taken root, there must be something more than hearsay to change it into disdain. After a

time, she determined to disbelieve the story, which in fact is the best way when you hear what you would rather were untrue. And yet, she thought, what could it be to her, whether true or not? What could it be to her, whom he loved, or whom deceived? Her he had forgotten, or remembered but to scorn; and then her spirit would come to her assistance, and a momentary flush overspread her cheek, as the remembrance of her high descent on one side, the granddaughter of a duke, and the antiquity though not nobility of Mr. St. Quentin's family on the other, passed like the last bright glow of dying embers through her proud soul. But she soon softened again.

The harvest over at Nugent Hall, its master and mistress put themselves into their travelling carriage, and set out for Blore Abbey. Our hero had started the day before on horseback, attended by a groom. This was a sort of way-faring for which he had a great passion: he loved to explore a retired and romantic situation;

and often went miles out of his way in making what he intended for short a cut across the country. An excellent horseman, he allowed nothing to stop his progress, and often went over places where it puzzled his groom to follow him. But what he lost in time was amply repaid by the varied scenery which he enjoyed in leaving the eternal high road; and the journey received additional zest from the little incidents and adventures that occurred. The politics of the day, as retailed by the hedge blacksmith who replaced his horse's shoe, had infinite charms for him in their quaint originality. The sudden appearance of a neat farm-house or village inn turned aside the intentions he might have harboured, as to dining or sleeping at the principal hotel of the next large town.

Little adventures connected with this sort of travelling served now to divert his mind from preying upon itself; and his health, much improved by his week's *séjour* at Nugent Hall, was firmly re-established by the exercise derived

from making the journey thence to Blore on a horse, whose paces were the absolute "poetry of motion;" a phrase much more aptly applied, in our opinion, to the piaffings, the pesades, the caracoles, and all the different graces of the *ménage*, or the trottings, canterings, and gallopings of a noble steed, than to the kickings and sprawlings of an Irish jig-dancer, and his clumsy partner.

We shall commit Hyde to the care of some cherry-cheeked damsel, at the neat and cleanly village inn, or the kindly attentions of some farmer's family, while we take the reader on to the Duke of Bolingbrook's, at which place, *soit dit en passant*, Mr. and Mrs. Nugent, having passed our hero on the road, arrived some time before him.

CHAP. IV.

— Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view.

PERHAPS there is nothing in England more magnificent than the new house and grounds of Blore Abbey; and if they are sumptuous, the ruin of the old one is splendidly beautiful.

We could tell a long story of the circumstances attending its founding and endowment, but these we will spare the reader, merely saying that it received its name from events arising out of the battle of Blore Heath, in the bloody wars of the Roses. There is a harrowing tale of parricide and penance, which, as it cannot at all

concern the present possessors of this noble property, we gladly pass over in silence. The intermediate proprietors have ruthlessly torn down some part of its walls, to assist in the building of a more modern dwelling, which has in its turn given way to the princely mansion now occupying another position, yet retaining the name of the partly demolished, vast, and venerable structure, justly the admiration of all beholders.

It is, in fact, impossible to conceive any thing more beautifully picturesque than the situation and appearance of this old pile. Sir Walter Scott advises those who would "view fair Melrose right" to "visit it by the pale moonlight;" to him, however, who visits the ruins of Blere Abbey, we give the advice to view them a short time before sun-set, when the lengthening shadows, cast by the brilliant beams of the departing sun, and the deep gloom that prevails in the interior of the edifice viewed from without,—with the more strongly traced arches,

and partly ivy-wreathed windows of exquisite shape and carving,—give an awe, a sublimity, to the quiet and lonesome, though splendid scene,—that the power of language would fall far short of in the description, we had almost said, even were the pen wielded by the hand of a Scott. But he alone, of all who have touched upon such themes, is able to describe its beauties.

The glittering ripple of the lovely river, as the sun's last rays flashed their red glare upon its waters while they wandered by, the woods and undulating grounds of the demesne with the purple hills beyond, and the glowing summer sky when we took our farewell view of these ruins, inspired us with a feeling we can never forget, and caused in us a throb of compassion for those who, still wasting their time in a town, could not with us enjoy this rich, this almost heavenly treat.

After saying that it would require the powers of the mighty minstrel to sing its praises, or

duly to describe its beauties, we shall not insult the readers by an attempt, which would, we are well assured, fail in every thing, but to draw down well-merited contempt upon our own head.

Besides, we are writing on so rainy a day, and at such a distance of time (some few months, for instance) from that on which we last saw Blore, that, did we ordinarily possess a brilliant pencil, we are certain the effort to depict it would at present be in vain.

But we are making an apology for what the reader would be very glad of: however, we yet beseech his indulgence a little longer; while we say that we have also seen these ruins by that "dim religious light," which streaming through "the east oriel," sheds its uncertain influence upon all the splendid wreck of departed pomp, giving to the mind a mournful idea of the transitory glory and vain hopes of man; but still we shall never, never forget the soft sun-set glow, the strongly-marked light, and shady

gloom, which seemed to hallow the very ground on which their influence rested, when we breathed a reluctant adieu to the calm yet melancholy scene.

Monastic buildings were usually erected on low grounds near a river, probably for the advantages of the goodly fish with which the jolly friars were wont to regale themselves on days of fast and penance; (sad fare, that of trout and salmon!) and the vicinity of water for culinary and other purposes, or in case of fire, combined with the shelter such low sites afforded from the boisterous storms of winter.

In one of these sweet verdant levels stand the splendid remains we have just mentioned. The modern house occupies a higher situation, at about half a mile's distance, and intervening are several slopes and lawns, ornamented with fine single trees of immense size and age, besides groups of scattered younger, though tall wood, which enhance the beauty of the view without shutting out the Abbey, conspi-

uous in its lowness, and commanded from the comparative eminence on which the house stands.

The ancient deer park, extending far and wide in front of the mansion, is a scene of unparalleled sylvan glory. Here reigns "in pride of place" the monarch oak, stretching out his fantastic arms from a gnarled and knotted trunk, the growth of centuries; there towers the lofty elm, or wide-spreading beech, mingled with venerable thorns and ash trees; but where are the hands that planted them? Alas! forgotten! the manly forms they graced have long received their summons. Generations have passed away since, and in their turns are no more thought of; while the twisted thorn, that reverend indicator of antiquity, serves but to remind weak, fallible man, however old his family, or high his rank, of his own short, uncertain period of existence.

It is not our intention to enter into an elaborate description of the superb house, its colon-

nades, and steps of Parian marble, its Italian baths, its terraces, its stables which might lodge a prince, its vast hall of entrance, and gallery supported by Corinthian pillars, or the admirable pictures and statues with which it is enriched; the sumptuous furnishing of the rooms, or the brilliant painting of divers fabulous histories, which ornament the ceilings of its halls, its banquetting, and music-rooms: we must rather introduce the reader to its noble owner, the Duke of Bolingbrook, who, with great good taste preferring the quiet of Blenheim Abbey to the senseless waste of life and time which a more fashionable existence induces, had for some years given up the practice of passing the winter in town; and with the exception of a sojourn of no very long duration abroad, and an occasional visit to a watering-place, had confined himself strictly to the country, where, esteemed by all who knew him, he had given up his time to agricultural pursuits. We have before declared ourselves unversed

in the science of geonics, and cannot therefore judge of the delights they may inspire: however, as it was, the duke had relinquished the senate, in which his name had long borne a conspicuous part, for the less distinguished, though more unruffled tenor of a country life; and by his exchanging the guidance of the state for that of the plough (we speak figuratively) had left his part in the political drama to be played by his son Lord Iford.

But "Love will still be lord of all," and we have therefore drawn Iford in love, instead of Iford in the House, though he was scarcely brilliant enough in either to make a great figure. However, as we have seen, he was the successful rival of Burgoyne, a man whose first-rate abilities calculated him to shine in any situation where he might be placed, although his talents were so woefully misapplied, or rather wasted and thrown away. But Lord Iford had many good qualities of both head and heart, and Louisa liked him, which was quite enough.

He had obtained twenty thousand pounds with his countess ;—not a very large dowry, but much more than sufficient in the eyes of her fascinated bridegroom, the liberality of whose father, joined to splendid expectations, made fortune an object of very minor consideration where all the virtues and all the graces united in his wife.

The duke and duchess had attended their son's marriage ; but as they had now returned to Blore, we shall introduce them to the reader in their own proper place.

The former was a man of about sixty, a day before or a day after, as Moore says,—not the poet, but the almanack-maker. He was, (we mean the duke) a somewhat formal and dignified personage, gray, and rather thinly-locked, with a countenance which bore either the traces of great bodily pain or excessive care from the harassings of political affairs, or more private causes ; if the latter, it must of course be secret to us : perhaps a combination of all might be the cause. Still, notwithstanding his fre-

quent attacks of gout, the duke was, in face and figure, a comely and strikingly noble and distinguished-looking man. To the becoming dignity of his rank, he added the benevolence and greatness of a good and liberal heart. Such was his grace of Bolingbrook. The duchess was sister to Lady Malmesbridge, but possessing a greater flow of spirits, and a proportionate share of fascination. Proud and affable, witty and *naïve*, haughty and condescending, stable and sincere in her friendships, yet changeable and fickle in her disposition, as to other things, as an April day,—she was a strange, yet lovely personification of numerous foibles, with many virtues, and all the graces, combined and associated heterogeneously in one woman. Much younger than her lord, she at times impressed one with an idea that theirs had not been the best chosen union in the world; but let that pass: the duchess has always shown herself an affectionate and devoted wife, and with any contrast of disposition we have nothing to do.

A numerous party had been invited, and were now nearly all assembled at Blore. With most of these we have met before in earlier pages; such as the Malmesbridges, the Plantagenets, Wyndham Herbert who was a connexion of the duke's, Sir Gilbert Opal, Lord St. Columb; by the bye, we have only heard of him; Colonel Rolles, &c. &c. The Marquis of Modbury was also there, as was the Duke of Rippon, Lady Luxury, Foley Ogle of course, for Miss Dacres formed one of the party; and all these, with the Nugents, made up a strong garrison. Old Lady Wetherby had been invited, in compliment to the last-mentioned people; but the expenses of the journey suited as little with her parsimonious propensities, as the sinful pomps and vanities, which she thought must be the leading features of Blore Abbey, did with her starched ideas of propriety and sanctity: she therefore declined the invitation; and, with her *aide-de-camp* George Maskwell, had taken up her abode in Hill-street for the remainder of the

year, whence she could, with her antique equipage, in a few minutes transport herself into the country of Hyde Park ; though the erection of the statue of Achilles, in the unattired garb of nature, had given her ladyship serious uneasiness. She thought the rule which was once hung up at Almack's, viz. that no gentlemen were to be admitted without breeches, ought to have been put in force as to the green man in the Park.

We wonder, by the bye, that there is not a committee of men established to regulate the nether garments of the gentlemen at Almack's, for the subject certainly does appear to us rather out of the province of ladies.

CHAP. V.

Those happiest smiles,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd.

SHAKESPEARE.

OUR hero, an early riser in the country, had set out from the old Hall, as the day dawned upon the glittering green boughs of its woody environs; and a beautiful and sweet time is it to find oneself on horseback, while the birds are carolling their matin prime, and the mist is still curling along the low grounds, though essaying to rise aloft. The sun was within a short half

hour of setting, on the second day of his journey, as he entered the demesne of Blore Abbey. Having gained access by a nearer gate than that of the grand entrance, and received instructions, of no very clear import however, from a countryman, he proceeded slowly and in silence along a grassy glade, followed by his groom. They were obliged to use caution, from the number of roots which crossed their path, and the uncertainty as to whether the one they were pursuing would bring them into the great avenue. Hyde was too much occupied in mind with anticipations of meeting Lady Georgina, or he must have been delighted with the woody wildness of the lovely and romantic scene through which he was passing.

But the beauty of the scene was thrown away upon both the horsemen, the one thinking of his mistress, the other of his dinner. They at length struck into the approach, and Hyde, looking at his watch, put his horse into a brisk trot over a road, that might from its smoothness

have served for a bowling-green ; and after winding for some distance through the most beautiful plantations and lawns, studded with clumps and single trees, suddenly entered a thick wood, of which the branches met overhead ; so dark, so sombre, that the eye could scarcely penetrate its depths for the distance of two or three yards, though here and there a path was observed threading its gloom. From this they as suddenly emerged into the magnificent park, when the noble mansion and its near grounds burst upon the view. A handsome bridge was now crossed, and the house rapidly neared, while the ancient thorns and oaks seemed dancing in joyous round as they passed, and the deer gazed and fled from the fearful vicinity of man.

It happened that, owing to the short cuts Hyde had this day made, or thought to make, in a country unknown to him, his journey was prolonged beyond the expected time, and Mr. and Mrs. Nugent had arrived some hours be-

fore him. So large a party as were assembled at Blore could not be kept waiting dinner for one young man, and they of course sat down without him. Georgina was however painfully alive to the disappointment of not seeing Hyde when the Nugent carriage arrived ; and hour after hour wearing away without his appearance, hope long deferred, and anxiety for his safety, created a high degree of excitement. Dinner was announced, and no Hyde came. She complained of head-ache, said she would not go in to dinner, but remain in the drawing-room, notwithstanding the surmises and scandal such a resolution might occasion amongst some of her fair friends who knew that our hero was expected. But she really felt too unwell to join the party ; and she knew that, if she did, her nerves might overcome her ; and it would be worse to make an exhibition of her feelings during dinner, than to give latitude for discussion amongst the kind-hearted, gentle fair ones.

At length the trampling of horses was heard ;

and starting up from her sofa, Georgina saw Nugent already dismounted and running up the steps. The next moment our hero was in the hall, where he met Lady Elizabeth crossing from the dining-room, with a peach for her sister. Great was his joy at this intimation of the Malmesbridges being already there, and at meeting with the kind and amiable Elizabeth, who held out her hand, and welcomed him to England and to Blore.

“How do you do? I’m so glad to see you! How long have you been here? How is your sister—where is she?” said Hyde, all in a breath.

Lady Elizabeth smiled, and pointed to the drawing-room door.

“Here is a person who will answer all your questions,” said she.

Hyde quickly made his way to the room which contained his treasure, and the next moment clasped her in his arms.

“My dear, dear Hyde!”

“My kindest, loveliest Georgina!” and nu-

merous other endearing expressions, unintelligible or absurd to those who never loved, were quickly uttered, and mingled with half-iterated and unanswered questions.

Lady Elizabeth very considerably walked to the hall door, which continued open, and gazed at the glorious sun-set, till having, as she thought, given the lovers time to compose themselves into rational beings, she entered with the peach.

Lady Georgina wept and smiled by turns, or rather at the same time. Her nerves had been tried to the utmost by one circumstance or another during the last two months; absence, expectation, delay, temporary disappointment, anxiety, hope, and fear, had worked them up to a pitch of excitement not likely to be allayed immediately the wished-for meeting took place.

The smiles, however, at length became the conquerors, and the tears retreated; while Lady Elizabeth addressed Hyde, to take off his attention from her sister: "Mr. Nugent," said she,

“how could you keep us in such a state of perturbation about you? You have been very naughty indeed, to stay so long at Lisbon, and then to be taken ill just as we were leaving town, and stay at horrid Portsmouth. This poor little girl has been fretting herself to death about you; but we shall make you too conceited!”

“Indeed you will,” exclaimed Lady Georgina, blushing: “do not believe Elizabeth, Mr. Nugent! pray do not. You could not think I should be so foolish, could you?”

Hyde looked uncomfortable.

“Well, we must not offend his high mightiness,” said her ladyship, holding out her hand: “I did feel anxious about you; there, we will be friends. I do not mean to be a coquette any more; I have left all my airs and graces in town.”

“A most melancholy place to leave them at, I assure you!” said Hyde, and he kissed the hand that was held out to him.

"I perceive you have brought yours with you, however. Perhaps that is a Portuguese air," said Lady Georgina.

"Do you know you have a very *travelled* air, Mr. Nugent?" observed Lady Elizabeth; "and I would advise you to go and redress your grievances, while they get you some dinner. You are scarcely presentable in those dusty boots; and the duchess, upon whom first impressions are lasting—sometimes at least—will be here in a very short time."

Lady Elizabeth rang the bell as she continued, "In our uncle's house, we must not let his guests be starved."

Hyde protested he required no dinner, preferring his present society to that of turkeys or grouse; but he was fairly turned out, and the servant who answered the bell received directions to show Mr. Nugent to his room, and get him some dinner ready in the meantime, as also to apprize the duke of his arrival; for she returned not to the company herself.

*

Hyde was ascending the brazen balustraded stairs, when he heard a door open, and divers scraps of female conversation in a continued Babel strain, though not too loud, as the fair bevy crossed the inner hall on their way to the suite of drawing-rooms. Could the different sentences be arranged in proper order, we might be induced to submit them to the public eye; but we doubt, even if that were possible, whether they would either edify or amuse.

“Mr. Nugent arrived?” said the duke, as the servant announced this to be the fact: “get some dinner for him immediately,” continued he, rising to go out and welcome him.

Mr. Nugent senior, however, prevented the duke’s egress, by surmising that his son was changing his dress, as the roads were very dusty.

The servant confirmed this supposition, and the duke sat down again.

Hyde’s toilette did not occupy much time: his boots were soon kicked off, one sticking in

the grate, and the other reposing upon the bed, where each was allowed to remain, till his servant should come to extricate the one and disturb the other. The man, indeed, had some trouble in redeeming his master's wardrobe from the chaos into which he found it plunged, at the completion of his Adonisation; for neckcloths, boots, waistcoats, stockings, and garments of every description, were piled together in one undistinguishable and heterogeneous mass. It was one of Hyde's failings to be always in a hurry, more particularly when there was no occasion; the consequence of which was, that he was generally twice as long about a thing as a person who went systematically to work. On this day, however, he was wonderfully expeditious; and descending to a breakfast-room, where his repast was prepared, and having eaten a few mouthfuls, was ushered into the dining-room.

Here his task was not an agreeable one, or at least would have been very much the reverse of

pleasant to a man who laboured under any degree of *mauvaise honte*. This, however, Hyde was free from : yet he had, a young commoner, to pay his respects to a duke whom he had never before seen, before a number of people, most of whom were of higher rank than himself ; and, worst of all, he was conscious of the observation of his father. This was a trial for his powers of *bienseance*, or rather *nonchalance*, both of which qualities he here displayed *à la lettre*. Easy without impudence, unconstrained without too great familiarity, he pleased the duke by his address ; he delighted the marquis, who got up to shake hands with him ; he was gladly and affectionately welcomed as a brother by Lord Iford ; Herbert's greeting was friendly ; and all, save the last, were sincere. Mr. Nugent's feelings were those of a father, proud of such a son.

After the discussion of a few glasses of Burgundy, our hero, with the rest of the gentlemen, retired to the drawing-room, where coffee was

announced as ready, and where the ladies, weary of their own and each other's society, had been some time anxiously awaiting them.

As Hyde entered the room, with his father's hand on his shoulder, an unknown voice saluted his ear. It was a sweet voice; but though a feminine one, its language was rather that of a gentleman, or, more strictly speaking, a coachman, than a lady.

"Drove him twelve miles within the hour, and never turned a hair!" said the voice; "ne—ever turned a hair!"

"Who could this be?" thought Hyde.

"And pray," said Sir Gilbert Opal, "was it a case of fanning?"

"Not a bit: never touched him once!" said the voice: "devil! I wouldn't keep a horse in my stable that required the whip."

"Who is she?" said Hyde to his father, having by this time observed the pretty speaker, at whose feet sat Foley Ogle on a low footstool.

"Can you not guess?" said Mr. Nugent; "can you not guess? Miss Dacres;—will she do?"

"Not for me," said Hyde; "I shall not dispute the prize with that fierce-looking knight, who is making his 'lowly suit' to her *beaux yeux*; for he seems unable to get in a word between her and the brilliant Sir Opal."

"There is one good point about her," said Mr. Nugent; "she does not use the whip, you hear."

"To her horses," replied Hyde; "there is no saying what she might do to her husband. I'll none of her!"

They advanced further into the room.

"I want to introduce you to the duchess," said Mr. Nugent; "and you ought to pay your respects to Lady Malmesbridge, and speak to your mother and sister, and then you are at liberty to go and flirt with your friends, the Miss Plantagenets."

"Thank you, sir, but you will excuse my doing

the last, while there is any other flirtable personage in the room. Besides I must see Louisa first, before I—— Oh, there she is!" and perceiving Lady Iford's back towards him, he softly advanced, put his arm round her waist, and turning her half away from him at the same time, so as to prevent her seeing who it was, gently forced her into the next room, the open door of which they were near; and there an embrace and a kiss between the brother and sister evinced each other's joy at the meeting.

On his return to the principal room, Hyde was taken up to the duchess by his father.

"Allow me to present Mr. Hyde Nugent to your grace."

"I am very much delighted to see Mr. Hyde Nugent," said the duchess; "the rather that his arrival at Blore has been of wonderful service to a certain young lady, who seems much recovered since the news came. Not that we were unsolicitous about you, Mr. Nugent; but

the lady in question always feels so sensibly when there is a rumour of possibility as to a young gentleman's breaking his neck ; for they say you leap park palings, and all that sort of thing."

Hyde confessed he had not entered by the approach-gate, but said that there had been no leaping in the case to-day. Mr. Nugent turned off, leaving his son with the duchess.

"You are not acquainted with this tender-hearted young lady, I dare say. Let me introduce you to her. She will doubtless be very glad to have an opportunity of seeing the gentleman who has created such an anxiety."

Feigning a belief that the parties were unknown to each other, the duchess took Hyde up to Lady Georgina, who, wondering what all this meant, began to change colour very fast.

"Georgina, this is Mr. Hyde Nugent, about whom we were all in such a state of perturbation before dinner. Is he not a very nice per-

son? How is your appetite, my love?—returned yet? or do you think you will be able to sleep without having dined?”

Lady Georgina blushed, and turned pale, and blushed again, during this strange introduction; but gathering courage, (for the duchess would not listen to Hyde’s attempted explanation) she told her aunt that she had been acquainted with Mr. Nugent some time.

“What? did you know Mr. Nugent before? Oh, no, you are mistaken; he is very like the Mr. Nugent you saw before dinner, his father; and there is the hallucination. How very apt people are to make these mistakes as to person! I am quite certain you could never have seen each other before this minute. Why, Mr. Nugent, what is the matter with you? You are blushing as if you were ashamed of making an acquaintance with.—— I can assure you she is not beneath your notice, being the Lady Georgina Capel; I forgot to tell you her name before, daughter of Lady Malmesbridge, and

nearly related to the person who has the honour of speaking to you. But I dare say you will find each other out by and bye, and become better acquainted, so I shall leave you to yourselves."

At the conclusion of this extraordinary tirade, the duchess moved to another part of the room. The young couple felt very uncomfortably situated, as the marquis of Modbury had been looking on in silent wonder, and listening to every word. Our hero, however, with a tolerably good grace, kept up a few minutes' conversation with Lady Georgina, and then left her to pay his respects to the marchioness, and speak to his mother, though not to flirt with the Miss Plantagenets, who were in high force, and at present honouring Colonel Rolles by quizzing him most unmercifully, while they deigned at the same time to receive the *petits soins* of Herbert, turned off by Lady Georgina.

The marchioness gave Hyde *l'accueil gracieux*, made many kind inquiries as to his late

travels and adventures, asked after Bridgewater and Burgoyne, and was in fact every thing the sanguine mind of young Nugent could wish.

The duke, coming up, took our hero's arm, and introduced him to those in the room with whom he had been previously unacquainted, except by sight. Sir Gilbert he had, of course, often met in town, independent of their being old school-fellows; but whether from a settled contempt of "such an article," as he termed him, or from old Westminster prejudices, he disliked the man the more he saw of him.

Lord Modbury, and the Duke of Rippon, commonly known by the name of the connoisseur duke, the noble host introduced him to.


"Let me see," continued he; "Mr. Foley Ogle you are not acquainted with, are you? But he is too deeply engaged with Miss Dacres, to be disturbed at present: he is her walking-stick out of doors, and her *ridicule* in the drawing-room, I might almost say, if the spelling

would admit of the pun. "However, Ogle is rather particular, and does not allow himself to be laughed at by any one else."

Hyde begged he might not be the cause of interruption to so agreeable a *tête-à-tête*.

"You will have an opportunity of seeing more of him to-morrow," said the duke; "but in my house, Mr. Nugent, I always endeavour to make people known to each other at first and after I have introduced them, it is their own fault if they do not become friends. I am aware it is an antiquated custom, but not the worse for that, as you will one day perhaps discover, my young friend!"

The duke now began a conversation with Lord Modbury upon the affairs of the nation but the latter was not a star in the house, and the duke had it all to himself; and after haranguing for some time upon the corn laws, paper currency, balance of power, sinking fund, &c. he perceived the marquis yawn, and changed the subject at once to farming. Lord Modbury was



quite as much in the dark on this theme, and the duke pitied him. Hyde turned to speak to Lord St. Columb, but was soon hushed by the sound of a voice he could not mistake: it was his sister's. Lady Elizabeth joined her, and music became the order of the evening.

The Dacres sat down to the piano-forte in due time, and sang the beautiful *All' idea* of Rossini, with Foley Ogle, in uncommonly good style. There was harping also, and Lady Georgina was entreated by Miss Plantagenet to sing, because the latter knew she was out of voice and must fail; but Georgina had too much penetration to become the dupe of Miss Plantagenet, and civilly though firmly declined.

How different a person did Hyde think Miss Dacres from the picture he had formed of her in his imagination! He expected to find a stately, melancholy, and reserved personage, grieving for the loss of her only brother, yet striving to smile through her tears, that the

sadness of her look might not throw a gloom over the party now with the duke and duchess. What was his surprise, then, at seeing her already the gayest of the gay, her mourning weeds thrown by, and a fashionable, and it must be confessed, very tasteful dress, any thing but *deuil*, assumed in its stead! her eye looking for applause of all she said or did! vanity, yet cleverness and wit showing themselves in her conversation, and her every action put on for effect! Still she was pretty and graceful, and had a large fortune, which covered a multitude of sins; was liberal, and indeed generous to a degree; and perhaps the only quality she stood in need of was what she had the greatest contempt for, namely, common sense. Lady Georgina, we have said, did not feel equal to the task of singing; and while her sister and friend were warbling their mellifluous notes, Hyde took the opportunity of transporting himself to her side. They had much to say of all that

each had felt and encountered in the long, long, dreary time that cruel fate had sundered them—nearly two months!

Blore was a house in which there was no restraint. Music and not loud talking might go on at the same time; or if the parties wished to discourse more at their ease, there was free access to other rooms adjoining, as large, and furnished in precisely the same manner as that in which they usually congregated, the doors between which being generally, always in summer, left open, the suite of rooms had all the appearance of one, while it in fact gave a sort of licence for withdrawing oneself from society for awhile. Some, whose consciences or feelings were more tender than others, or who loved music too much to interrupt it, preserved a strict silence during the performance of their friends. Amongst these were not the Misses Plantagenet, themselves great players, but no singers; a genus which never can preserve silence in a room. In fact, it seems the signal

always for a *grand bruit* when the vocal music ceases, and an instrumental duet, between two performers, however good, is heard to commence. Then begins the Babel of tongues; then is all the wit or folly let loose, which was pent up for such a length of time in the impatient noddles of those who have not had the real good taste to like good singing, or who have not been able to prevail upon themselves to think the various screamings and die-aways of the self-pleased, would-be siren, (should such unhappily have been the style of person who has murdered Italian, and inflicted *peine forte et dure* upon the audience for a quarter of an hour) any thing but the trash it is or was. We cannot indeed say that this wish to talk is altogether unnatural, though it is certainly unfair; for if the singing has been good, one wishes to praise it, or perhaps not to run the chance of bad music after it; if, on the contrary, it has been execrable, there is a very reasonable wish to divest the mind of all recol-

lections upon so disagreeable a topic; and the most natural resort on such an occasion is to one's next neighbour, who, equally as anxious to talk as ourselves, and tired of listening, begins in a yet louder key to hold forth upon some subject which has been haunting him during the whole of the last song. The Plantagenets had often felt this; and, determined to have their revenge, no matter upon whom,—engaged the thoughtless Rolles, the foolish Opal, and the agreeable Herbert in a more noisy conversation than the rules of *bienseance* permitted.

. But it is now, alas! (how altered since the youthful days of our great grandmothers!) the civil, or rather the correct thing, to be as rude and insolent as possible, provided it be done in a certain way. While some of the party played music, others played cards, others talked, laughed, played with thaumatropes, composed bad epigrams, slept, or yawned and nodded over a newspaper. Lord William Capel wished

for the first of September, and his brother wondered "when that eternal French clock on the chimney-piece would arrive at bed-time." The two young lords in despair took possession of two *bergères*, and slept upon them for an hour, snoring in concert to the music. Their sister Georgina was better employed, at least in her own estimation. She had wandered with Hyde into one of the adjoining rooms, the soft yet glowing light from whose Grecian lamps, its Etruscan vases, its lesser and elegantly-draped statues, useless ornaments, sumptuous furniture, rare flowers and plants, and tables strewn with books, prints, miniatures, and expensive toys for grown children, of which we now see so many French, Italian, and English scattered over our drawing-rooms and boudoirs,—evinced the tasteful yet capricious and varying character of the duchess, to whose hand and eye the disposal of all these *meubles*, this mixture of alabaster and or-molu, marble and rose-wood, pasteboard, ivory, Genoa velvet,

Gold lace and gorgeous trimmings, and hangings of all sorts, owed its attractiveness; for there was no crowding, no incongruity, not the shadow of bad taste, or the least symptom of ill-judged parsimony; all was in keeping, all was splendid, rich, and beautiful, even the very toys before-mentioned. Into such a *paradis terrestre* had strayed the handsomest couple in England, Hyde Nugent and Georgina Capel; and, by their presence, given the finishing touch of nature to the otherwise unfinished work of art.

They had many things to talk of, although they said them not; at least, not half of what they wished to say, or half they had thought of while separate. But they nevertheless contrived to exchange much communion of heart; and perhaps this very interview was the most delightful they ever had. Time, which stopped with others, with them flew on rapid wings. The music in the adjoining room, although awakened by those who were dear to them, fell

on inattentive ears, deaf to all sounds but those of each other's voice.

But no unmixed happiness can long be enjoyed on this earth, and that of our fond pair was doomed to be interrupted.

Lady Malmesbridge was playing cards, but Herbert lounged *par hasard* into the room where Hyde and his ladye-love were holding their sweet converse, begged their pardon, and walked out, begging also, when he returned to the other room, that the Misses Plantagenet would indulge themselves with a peep into the dove-cote, where they would see two turtles billing and cooing in the most tender manner. There was some excuse for Herbert, because he was jealous ; but there was none for the ill-natured, and almost vulgar laugh of the two ladies, to whom the communication was made. However, they were prevented from taking their peep by the duke coming up to ask them for some overture of Rossini's, which they had performed *à ravir* the evening before ; and ill-na-

ture was, for the time, sacrificed upon the altar of vanity.

The duchess had overheard Captain Herbert's piece of information ; and calling Sir Gilbert Opal, who had just said something excessively silly, though, as he thought, very witty, and was now sitting on an arm of a sofa, with his mouth open, kicking his heels, though half inclined to fall asleep, " Come with me, Sir Gilbert," said her grace of Bolingbrook, " and try whether your powers of rhetoric with a certain young lady will induce her to relinquish the design she seems to have formed, not to let us hear the sound of her voice this evening."

The duchess knew perfectly well that Georgina would not sing, neither did she wish her ; and she knew also that Opal was too stupid to see that she meant to use him as a tool, whereby to interrupt what might be designated a flirtation by the Plantagenets, &c. Sir Gilbert was, in fact, flattered by the powers of persuasion that the duchess had ascribed to his

silver tongue, in the exact degree in which it lacked them. He "grinned horrible a ghastly smile," and in his usual winking and spluttering manner, addressed Georgina, who was not very well pleased at the interruption.

"Lady Georgina," said he, "why won't you favour us with the sound of your dulcet voice this evening? We are all dying to hear you; pray let me conduct you to the piano-forte."

Georgina protested she was too unwell,—her head ached. To-morrow she should be very happy,—indeed she could not to-night.

"Do not allow yourself to be so repulsed, Sir Gilbert," said the duchess: "come, Georgina, walk with me into the next room. Mr. Nugent, bring me my shawl from the ottoman, where Miss Dacres is sitting: there is so much air from that open window, that I am afraid of a cold."

"You provoking aunt!" said Lady Georgina, *sotto voce*, "why will you persist in making me sing?"

" Sir Gilbert, pray shut that outer door. **This** is the very palace of the winds," exclaimed the duchess, pretending to shiver on a still evening in August: " I do not want you to sing, dearest! but we must keep that stupid man awake by giving him something to do. I assure you, Sir Gilbert," continued she, upon the return of the brilliant baronet, " I assure you I will not speak to you for a week, unless you prevail with this little singing-bird."

" Ah, Lady Georgina," said Sir Gilbert, " you know the old story of the little bird that could sing, and wouldn't sing?"

" Yes, yes," said the duchess; " but I will not have this bird *made* to sing, unless by the force of persuasion; so as you have not succeeded in your endeavours, Sir Gilbert, we sentence you to Coventry for a week."

" To which Coventry?" said Sir Gilbert, laughing immoderately at his own wit. The two ladies laughed *at* him, not with him; but this did equally well for Sir Gilbert.

“Come, come, don’t make a fool of yourself,” said the duchess, taking his arm, and pushing him gently on, as she and Georgina moved towards the other room. “Here comes Mr. Nugent,” continued she: “he does not appear to have succeeded in his mission either. Well, Mr. Hyde Nugent, where is my shawl?”

“There was none on the ottoman,” said Hyde.

“Oh, I believe I left it in my room before I came down to dinner; but I ought to have one in every room of this house.”

“Shall I go to your grace’s room for it?” said Hyde, with a smile.

“Impertinent!” returned the duchess. “Oh, there is Mr. Ogle with it round his head, like a malignant and turban’d Turk. I will make his sublimity a present of it now, for well I judge there was at least a bottle of *huile antique* expended on those jetty curls to-day.”

“’Twere best your grace not give out such a

notice," said Hyde, "or there will be a turban'd Turk in every room of the house, eager for the honour of wearing a scarf presented by your fair hand."

"Georgina," said the duchess, "you have been schooling your new acquaintance, I find."

"I should rather say he had been taking a lesson from you, dear aunt!" replied Lady Georgina, "had I not known him to be sufficiently *au fait* before (as you will have it) he became my new acquaintance."

"Poor Lady Luxury is dying for a game at *écarté*," said the duchess, as they entered the other room. "You play of course, Mr. Nugent! Pray go and take pity on her; she loses her money with the best grace imaginable, I assure you."

Hyde wished to get off the affair, but the duchess walked him up to her luxurious ladyship, and saying he was an excellent *écarté* player, popped him down opposite to her.

Hyde was tired with his long ride, dazzled

with her ladyship's profusion of jewels, sick of proposing and being accepted, thought of Georgina, and lost his money. Lady Luxury pardoned his distraction, while she won his gold.

Hyde, finding that as long as he lost, there was no chance of a break, determined to apply himself sedulously for two or three games; and having decidedly the whip-hand of her ladyship when he chose to exert his powers, soon elicited an exclamation from her that she was tired, and a proposal that "this should be the last."

A tray of jellies, ices, and divers other confectionaries having been announced as awaiting the hungry in the anteroom, a general armistice took place. Music had long before died a natural death; cards, usually the longest livers when the play is high, now also gave up the ghost; the two lords were aroused from their trance; Foley Ogle ceased to make a tom-fool of himself, for that evening at least; and in

short all thought of retiring. The room was deserted by the yawning guests, who took their candles from the statues of footmen that were ranged in the vestibule, and retired to their apartments; the minor in rank at least, for the higher grades were lighted to their rooms by the grooms of the chambers.

CHAP. VI.

Soft she withdrew, and like a wood-nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
In gait surpassed, and goddess-like deport,
————— with bow and quiver arm'd.

MILTON.

THE party were assembling in the breakfast-room next morning, when Miss Dacres entered, dressed in her riding-habit; an excursion to some place in the neighbourhood having been proposed over night.

“Where's my Fooley?” exclaimed she.
“Where's Fooley Ogle?”

It may here be as well to specify that Ogle had renewed an acquaintance with the Dacres, commenced abroad, and he was literally what the duke had called him, her walking-stick, and her *ridicule*.

“Where’s Fooley Ogle?”

“Not down yet,” said Lady Georgina; “but Goose Gibbie is in the next room, booted and spurred.”

Miss Dacres laughed heartily.

“Oh you dear creature!” said she to Georgina, whom she had known about a week; “that is so like your happy talent at nomenclature. Oh, here comes my truant knight! Mr. Fooley, —I beg your pardon, Mr. Foley Ogley, do you know we have found a new brother for you,—Goose Gibbie, ha, ha, ha! the strong-hearted, ever-varying, pellucid gem in the next room.”

“Infinitely flattered!” said Mr. Ogle, stiffly.

“Indeed you may be,” returned Miss Da-

cres; "I mean to patronize the Opal, now that Lady Georgina has given him such an exquisite cognomen. After all, there is not much difference between an Opal and an Ogle, both blocks, only that one is a transparent, changeable stone, while the other is but a mere fossil; yet what's in a name?"

"Pardon me, fair Dacres," interrupted Ogle, "if I question the correctness of your immensely witty, sub-hypothetical comparison; for not only do I deny any affinity between an Ogle and an Opal, but I allege that this latter differs from the description you have given of it, inasmuch as the gem comes not within the class of pellucid, being more opaque and less hard. Vide Johnson for the truth of what I say, having myself consulted that gentleman shortly after my introduction to the baronet, to save the trouble of diving into more abstruse works."

"Sir Gilbert, Sir Gilbert, shine upon us, more brilliant, precious pebble! Leave the library and come into the breakfast-room;

and, do you hear, bring Johnson with you, that we may see to which of the flinty families you belong. What? you are not searching in the book of witty sayings to entertain me by the way as we ride, with the scraps your fickle memory may retain, are you?"

Sir Gilbert entered, with his mouth open, at one door, and the duke with a party at another.

"How do you do, duke? Here, Sir Gilbert," continued Miss Dacres, having quite forgotten the recent disquisition, "if you have the least tincture of knighthood in your composition, which I fear me in these degenerate days you may not have — Oh, here is Mr. Nugent. Mr. Nugent, they tell me you are descended from the great Du Guesclin, is't true? if so, help a suffering maiden, and loosen my bonds; I mean the buckle of my stock. My maid knows nothing about transferring stock, I find, but I shall transfer her if she doesn't learn a little better."

There was a slight curl upon Georgina's lip, as Miss Dacres stooped her pretty crop head, and submitted her white neck to Hyde's fingers; but whether from jealousy or not we will not pretend to divine.

"Thank you, Mr. Nugent,—Mr. Hyde Nugent, I believe; thank you very much," said the Dacres, when the service was performed. "I shall send my maid to you to learn how to buckle a stock. How do you do, you dear little duchess? you sweetest creature, how *do* you do? We are going to see Brabazon Castle to-day. The duke will drive Georgina, because she is the prettiest person here except myself, and I mean to ride."

The Misses Plantagenet drew themselves up.

"Lord Malmesbridge shall drive his wife," continued the Dacres. "Sir Gilbert shall drive you,—ho, he is bootied I perceive, determined to witch the world ——"

"My dear Penelope, pray let us have our breakfast," said the duchess, "and finish the

disposition of your forces afterwards ; only be good enough to leave me out."

Sir Gilbert begged to have the honour of driving her grace.

" Sir Gilbert !" said the duchess, with a look of feigned astonishment, " did I not sentence you to a week's durance at Coventry ?"

Sir Gilbert was preparing a witty reply, but the duchess moved off to her geraniums near a window, from which Hyde and Lady Georgina were intently admiring the prospect.

" Well, my dear Georgy," said the duchess, " I am afraid you passed a very dull half-hour with your new acquaintance yesterday. Dear, dear ! I forgot to water these geraniums yesterday ; they are absolutely dying, poor things, for want of water. Tell me truly, Georgy, were you not now very much obliged to me for interrupting your *tête-à-tête* ? Mr. Nugent wishes to make me believe that he was extremely facetious and agreeable. I dare say you found

Lady Georgina very pleasant upon so short an introduction, Mr. Hyde Nugent; but you seemed rather puzzled when I brought Sir Gilbert up to your assistance, and sent you to play at *écarté* with Lady Luxury. By the bye, Georgina, Sir Gilbert has lead mines, deep and rich, in Durham."

"He has a mine of lead in his brain," replied Georgina.

"Five-and-twenty thousand a year——"

"Will never buy me," said Georgina, laughing.

"It is not to be had every day; is it, Mr. Nugent? I asked Sir Gilbert down here on purpose to bring a match about between this perverse young lady and himself, and you see how she thanks me for it! Do you not advise her taking the baronet, Mr. Nugent?"

Hyde and Georgina exchanged a glance, which did not escape the quick eye of the duchess. A slight smile moved her lips, as

she turned from them to take her place at the breakfast-table, when she was no sooner seated, than a note was presented to her by a servant.

“Your Grace—requested—patronize ball—hum, hum——. There, ladies and gentlemen,” said she, tossing the note on the table,—“Torham races; a grand ball and supper;—gentlemen half-a-guinea, ladies five shillings; if you can afford that, go; if not, stay.”

“Wine included?” asked the duke, smiling.

“Not for the ladies I should think,” said Lord Iford.

“No,” observed the complaisant Colonel Rolles, “because they drink none.”

“Rather,” said Iford, “because they drink such a quantity of champagne, when it is to be had, that there must always be an extra charge made for their potations.”

“You mean to give your name to it?” said the duke.

“Certainly,” replied the duchess.

“ And go ? ”

“ Certainly not.”

“ Nor I, nor I,” said the Plantagenets, Colonel Rolles, and Sir Gilbert Opal, as soon as the duchess’s determination was known.

Foley Ogle and Miss Dacres said they would assist at the *fête*.

“ Do you intend to let the sun of your favour shine on the natives of Torham, Lady Georgina ? ” said Captain Herbert, as he seated himself next her, having just made his appearance after an elaborate toilette.

“ I suppose so ; if any of my family go, at least,” said Georgina ; “ though I am not particularly anxious.”

“ For my part,” said Sir Gilbert, as he stuffed a cubic foot of roll into his capacious mouth, “ for my part, I think it is a horrid bore attending these country and race balls ; one is obliged to make oneself agreeable to the rustics in shape of women.”

“ Not an easy task to you at the best of times,

Sir Gilbert," observed Miss Dacres, who now proceeded to beat up for volunteers. "Ogle, you shall be my recruiting sergeant on this occasion. We must make up a strong party in opposition to the duchess."

The duchess drew herself up.

"Duke, you'll go?" continued the Dacres.

"Pardon me," said his grace, "my dancing days have long been over."

"Oh yes, my dear duke, you must go. Now I think of it by the bye, Ogle, you shall not be the recruiting sergeant. I must have a guardsman; Captain Herbert, I'll take you."

Herbert excused himself neatly in Italian, but he was not to be so easily let off.

"There's Rolles, take him," said he, after trying in vain to avoid being squeezed into the *affaire*.

"Oh, no, Colonel Rolles will come, I know; but I want, must have, and cannot do without your assistance, most noble captain; besides, we must not give an officer of the colonel's

consideration the rank or office of a recruiting sergeant; a sub may take it. You are only a captain in the guards, you know."

Herbert now began to lose temper, and red-dened.

"You will find some of the officers of the ——— th very much at your disposal, I dare say," said he; "there are plenty of them quartered in Torham. The guards usually put off the soldier with the red coat, and do not speak technically, when they are in general society."

"Pooh!" said the Dacres, who had now got up, and was walking about the room, flourishing her whip, while the rest of the people looked on, wondering where this absurdity would end. "Pooh! I like the airs you guardsmen give yourselves. I'll take you down a peg,—poor devils!—There," continued she, giving him two or three light cuts over the arm,—“there; think yourself but too highly honoured in being a sergeant of the local militia. There are your stripes; that is what I used to do with my

brother, who was, as you say, "one of us," whenever he grew high."

Herbert deigned not a reply to all this folly, but trying to smile, left the room in a towering passion, and walked out upon the lawn before the windows, fanning himself with a cambric pocket-handkerchief.

The others had all now risen from table. The duke looked vexed; the duchess laughed, and Rolles laughed, also Sir Gilbert, and, we fear we must confess, Hyde and Georgina too.

"My dear Penelope," said the duke, "you allow your spirits to carry you too far."

"My dear duke! am I not privileged?" said the young lady. "Was not my poor brother in the Coldstream?—By the bye, I'll give Captain Herbert a piece of advice, since he's so warm. Captain Herbert, Captain Herbert," screamed she, out of the window, "you had better get out of the —— into the Coldstream, till you get a little cooler in your temper, and then re-join your old regiment."

Rolles laughed immoderately, thinking the

joke excellent, and quite new. The day was pronounced too hot for riding.

"I'll drive," said Miss Dacres.

"I hate to see a woman drive," said Hyde, apart to Lady Georgina.

"It is not a particularly lady-like amusement, certainly," replied Georgina.

The duchess remarked that the targets were in a shady place; "would not archery be a better occupation?"

"Oh! decidedly," said the Dacres, in raptures, "the very best in the world. We'll shoot. We have all got our uniforms, have we not? Lady Luxury, you said you expected yours from town," and she could scarcely suppress a smile; "is it arrived yet?"

Lady Luxury nodded an affirmative. The Misses Plantagenet had also got theirs. Miss Dacres had constituted herself "the captain of the archer-guard," and had put all she could get of men and women in authority under her; for they had nearly all some petty rank. She loved display, and was good at archery, and all

such nonsensical trumpery ; driving also she excelled in ; billiards she could play with a cue ; and she might have won old Izaak Walton's heart at tickling a trout, or landing a pike. It was said also that she used to hunt in Germany and France in men's clothes, *et selon la coutume du pays*, and that Foley Ogle first met her leading the chase of a wild boar at Chantilly, when her dress exactly corresponded with his own in every respect. The Duc de Bourbon is said to have made the introduction, and Foley rather fancied himself smitten with the fair Dian. He had recovered considerably since that time, which was three or four years previous ; but the large fortune she had come into had re-awakened all his affection ; and on the first day of his coming down to the Duke of Bolingbrook's, he met Miss Dacres in a woody retreat, where the ashes of his old vows were raked up, and the re-kindled flame, it was sworn, should never die more. She doubted him, but Ogle threw

himself on his knees, and uttered some such lines as these, only rather more foolish,—

Excellent wretch!

Perdition catch my soul but I do love thee,

And when I love thee not,—Chaos is come again.

It was now thought to be *une affaire finie*, though no one knew when the Dacres was to be metamorphosed into an Ogle. But we are shooting wide of the mark; we hope the archers may not fall under the same observation.

There was a uniform established for the Blore archers. Some of the party had already got theirs from town; others appeared, as they best might, in a sort of costume as nearly approaching to what archers formerly did *not* wear as could possibly be. Some sported white pantaloons and Hessian boots,—we are speaking of the gentlemen; others green pantaloons, with the like sort of boots. Foley Ogle clothed his stakes in long tights of Lincoln green, and white silk stockings; his upper man was apparelled in a coat to correspond; he had a frill round his

neck ; his quiver belt and broidered scarf crossed each other “ ’neath his decent shoulders ;” and a handsome *cor de chasse* hung by his side.

Sir Gilbert Opal’s dress had not yet arrived ; but he appeared before the drawing windows with his mouth open, and his whole person clad in the field uniform of his hunt, all but the boots. To do the baronet justice, he had a very symmetrical pair of legs, and he now displayed them in light-coloured breeches and rose stockings, by which he hoped to complete the conquest of Charlotte Plantagenet, with whom, as we have before mentioned, he was slightly smitten.

Foley Ogle waved his plumed and jewelled hat, in answer to some signal from the Dacres, who now appeared as Diana, with her bow and quiver, and a splendid diamond crescent in her hair, two or three ringlets of which were allowed to wanton unconfined. The Ogle blew a blast “ as loud as he could blow,” which made the non-shooters stop their ears. The archer

corps fell in at this summons of their lieutenant, and the fair captain, attended by Lords William and Henry Capel as her *aides-de-camp*, the Marquis of Modbury in mufti as her extra *aide-de-camp*, and Colonel Rolles *en grand costume* as her major of brigade inspected the troop, of which the greater part were officers; and had it not been for the fortuitous presence of three young Mr. Wilbrahams, who were making a morning visit, and volunteered their services, "unaccounted as they were," the line would have in point of numbers made a very sorry show. Sir Gilbert in his red coat, however, was a host in himself. Lady Luxury and the Misses Plantagenet were the only lady performers besides the Dacres. Herbert had looked in since breakfast, but finding the riding *projet* abandoned for archery, he curled his lip in contempt, wondered how people of sense could lend themselves as tools to a mad woman, as he designated the fair Penelope, and set out alone on a walk through the grounds.

The duchess and the rest of the ladies said they would attend as spectators of the shooting, and this party was joined by Mr. Nugent and the Duke of Rippon. The Duke of Bolingbrook and Lord Malmesbridge, with Mr. Nugent, went to the farm by a shady bridle road; his grace having first ascertained that all his guests were or would be occupied as they liked best. There were horses, he said, in the stables, carriages in the coach-houses: there was the library for those who read; the billiard-table, the music-room; and for the warm or weary there were baths or sofas; but, doubtless, as there was archery in contemplation, those of good taste and gallant feelings would prefer attending the ladies to any other occupation. Having thus disposed of his company, he set out with the two above-named gentlemen, to look at his merinos and south-downs.

Under the shade of some mighty elms, not far from the house, were set up two butts, at which to shoot for silver arrows, bugles, bows,

&c. &c. &c. Prizes were, however, only distributed on particular occasions, and this was ~~mere~~ practising day.

The fair votaries of Diana of Blore shot with a degree of skill unrivalled since the days of Cephalus and Procris; all the *élite*, therefore, were anxious to display their featligness, and the party set out for the ground. Ogle had preceded them; and now, as they entered the elm glade, "stood confess'd" the living statue of the Belvidere Apollo. He had let fly his arrow, and now watched it "hurtling" through the air, in the attitude and with some of the grace of that far-famed piece of sculpture.

"Bravo! bravo!" burst spontaneously from every mouth.

"Glorious Apollo!" said Miss Dacres, holding up her hands, as in admiration.

The Ogle was satisfied: it was a hit. The effect was good, which was all he had aimed at, for the arrow flew through the fields of space, till the broad arms of a giant tree intercepted its

progress, and doomed it to remain hid. in their leafy embrace, till the first storm, or the advance of autumn, should strip them of their leaves.

Louisa, for we still like sometimes to give her the name by which we knew her first, with her brother, and Lady Georgina, soon left a scene from which they derived no amusement, and struck into one of the romantic walks that threaded the grounds, a scene of hazel or of beech, following its capriciously varying path, under the shade of mossy aged boughs, or amidst the luxuriant foliage of younger and thicker plantations, and catching from its eminences here and there glimpses of a wide stretch of those beautiful grounds, or a view of the more distant country.

Louisa and Hyde had of course much to say, their communication of the evening before having been of very short duration. Their conversation was now enriched by the addition of Lady Georgina's, and although lovers gene-

rally prefer duets to trios, yet on this occasion Louisa's company was found by the others to give a zest to the walk, and at the same time to afford a sort of sanction to their being together, which perhaps the terms they were on would scarcely without the presence of a third person have strictly permitted. The conversation turned upon what they had just quitted;—when does it not? Hyde was a little what is vulgarly termed, bitter. He bore the Plantagenets no great love, and except that she had hurt the pride of Herbert that morning, whom Hyde was beginning very much to dislike, he had seen nothing in the character of Miss Dacres that at all pleased him. He found fault with archery, and decried it as absurd and ridiculous.

“Let a lady,” said he, “learn the use of fire-arms, if she must shoot; she *may*, though it is improbable that she will, some time or other, find occasion to put her knowledge into practice, and let her fire at a mark with a

pistol: it is more sensible, though perhaps less feminine, less *pretty*, graceful,—and does not admit of so much display; it *may* be of use;—but archery, ha! ha! ha! ridiculous to a degree! Even as to its grace in a lady, I am rather sceptical; for you know,

Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bow-string to his ear.

Only picture to yourself Lady Luxury making a stride! Then again women hunting; leaping five-barred gates, and not only exposing their delicate and fragile forms to danger, but, which is unavoidable sometimes, hearing language from grooms and whippers-in, not aware of the near presence of a lady, that the ear of that lady should never be profaned with. It is all very proper that the sex should be able to ride, and well; aye, even to sit a leap. Their horses may run away with them, when presence of mind, the result of a consciousness of a firm position

on horseback, may be the means of saving their lives; but there is no occasion to follow a pack of hounds across a country."

"Most sagely reasoned, sapient Mr. Nugent!" said Lady Georgina; "and pray, what have you to advance against driving? How the Dacres will laugh at you when I tell her of all this!"

"As to driving," said Hyde, good-humouredly, "I do not object to a lady's knowing how to guide a horse in harness; I do not positively *object* to it, though I think it *almost* a useless, and certainly a most unfeminine and ungraceful accomplishment; but a young lady may become the wife of a country parson—a sort of Mrs. Syntax, in fact; and while he is driving her in his gig on a Saturday afternoon, absorbed in the composition of the sermon he is to deliver the next day, the reins may fall from his hands; or the horse, feeling by instinct that his master is in a fit of abstraction, take a fancy to the green bank on the other side of the ditch, where, but

for the timely exertions and saving hand of his spouse, the reverend divine, wig, wife, and all, may be precipitated without benefit of clergy into said ditch."

The two ladies laughed at this picture of the parson's wife, and advised Hyde to suggest to Miss Dacres that she might now consider herself qualified to take aim at Dr. Orthodox, the duke's chaplain in ordinary, who was, however, at the time, absent on leave, gathering notes and important information to swell his forthcoming work, "The Lives of the Bishops of Dorchester."

"In the light I have considered it," proceeded Hyde, with mock gravity, "it may certainly be useful; but defend me from the sight of a woman wilfully taking up the ribands, or fanning a horse along twelve miles within the hour; or, worse than all, talking about her never having 'turned a hair,' afterwards!"

The ladies confessed the justice of his remarks,

but said he bore rather too hard upon the fair Dacres, who, by the bye, was a brunette.

“Gentlemen,” Louisa observed, “had always attached a degree of fascination to whatever she did; and that therefore Hyde displayed bad taste in not admiring her. Let it be driving, riding, billiard-playing, or music; shooting with bow and arrow, or angling in the stream; whether aiming at the heart, or at the more palpable butt; still there was a feminine grace about every action, that quite disarmed censure.”

“Yes,” said Hyde, “Captain Herbert had a striking proof of it this morning.”

“Captain Herbert deserves any thing of the kind that he gets,” replied Lady Georgina. “I was by no means sorry to see him ‘taken down a peg,’ as Miss Dacres terms it.”

“Nor I,” said Hyde; “and I am sure you must confess the beauty and elegance of that expression, as coming from the lips of a lady.”

“Do you not hear that Miss Dacres bestows

a grace upon all she says and does," said Louisa, "even where none before existed?"

A rustling of leaves, and a slight crackling of boughs, was just now heard in a path that crossed close a-head of them. The conversation stopped, till the party passed the line of intersection, when seeing no person, Lady Iford continued, "Besides, you must allow that Miss Dacres is excessively pretty: every one must allow that."

Hyde and Georgina looked at each other, and smiled. The latter shook her head, as she exclaimed, "Ah, Mr. Nugent! does your conscience smite you? Do you recollect, '*On peut conclure,*' &c. &c. &c.?"

"Come, come, Lady Georgina," said Hyde, smiling, "that was forgiven long ago. It is not fair to parade our sins a second time before our mind's too conscious eye."

"I am glad the lesson was of service, and that you really are or were penitent," replied her ladyship.

Hyde touched the hand next him with a light pressure; whether it was returned or not, we never heard; but it certainly is a delightful thing to touch the hand of her we love, after having had our little quarrels, especially if the hand be a pretty and a taper one; though, such fools are men while they are in this state of dreaming existence, that even the chance touch of the fair one's robe, the last glimpse of her floating drapery as it waved in the light breeze at parting, is food whereon to live for months, nay years. It is all nonsense to try, as some late authors have done, to prove that heroes and heroines eat, drink, or sleep; they do not. They can live a long time on the signature of a letter, "Ever, ever yours, devotedly, &c., &c."; or its seal; the name, for instance, or some rare device, and Italian motto, symbolical and expressive of never-dying attachment; and to do the poor things justice, it does last as long as can be expected, though the answer to the lover's first inquiries, after

returning from abroad, is perhaps, “ as *well* as can be expected ;” and the Morning Post shows him the birth of a son and heir to some particular friend, rather, or perhaps a great deal, richer than himself, by the lady whom he has just been gratuitously informed was Lady Mary this, or Miss that, and married Mr. or Lord so and so, nearly a year ago. After this, what remains but for the gentleman to leave his country and turn corsair, or to stay at home and,—we fear to state the consequences, but we must,—to hover around his former idol, to be resolute and determined, not to compromise his own or her good name, to find his friend too confident in the honour of the first lover, which in all, men or women, is very good till it is tried, and what then follows but an elopement? The old flame bursts forth afresh, after smouldering in the bosom perhaps for years; and when the lady has started in a carriage and four some eight or nine hours, a note is found on her

toilette-table, telling her husband what she has just told the gentleman who has carried her off, that "she never loved any but the one."

Lords of the creation, take our advice; think not to buy a heart with money; force not inclinations which you perceive are against you. Once refused, be not rash enough again to try for a consent; but be generous to her who is honourable enough to decline your proposals because she loves another; feel for her, and desist; think that it is better to secure her esteem by your delicacy, than to bring down her hatred by tempting her parents with the lure of wealth or title to force her into a match.

We have digressed more than we intended at starting, and in fact, it is time to bring the walk to a conclusion; therefore, Ladies Iford and Georgina, and Mr. Hyde, be good enough to turn about.

Louisa looked to her companions for an elu-

elucidation of the seeming mystery that subsisted in the intelligence between them.

“ You will not dare to include your sister in your —— ”

Hyde interrupted Lady Georgina, declaring that he had yielded the palm of victory to her upon the field of battle, and deprecated a triumph over the vanquished.

Our readers will recollect Lady Georgina's short but spirited defence of her sex at Almack's, or wherever it was ; Louisa was however quite in the dark, and begged for an explanation, which was playfully evaded by Georgina and Hyde, who merely satisfied her that she had no share in the thing. Of small consequence as was the secret, still it was a secret, and Louisa was a woman ; *ergo*, her curiosity was roused to the full, and she gave her companions little rest on the subject during the remainder of the walk.

As they passed the transverse section of the paths on their return, Hyde thought he per-

ceived something glitter a few yards from him ; a ray of sunshine glancing upon whatever it was, through the foliage. He bent towards the object, and discovered a broken gilt spur lying on the ground, near some recently bent and cracked hazel branches, amidst which some person seemed to have passed, by the slightly devastating track of a boot-heel.

“ Who wore fixed spurs this morning besides myself ? ” said Hyde, holding up the brilliant trophy, and beckoning the ladies to the place.

“ Captain Herbert,” said they, both at once.

“ Woods have ears as well as walls,” said Nugent ; “ listeners never hear any good of themselves, and the thief is caught in his own trap. And now after edifying you with these infinitely new and decidedly elegant proverbs, I propose that we return to the house, and give Captain Herbert his spur, as he will doubtless be in some tribulation at the discovery of his loss.”

In this determination they retraced their

steps homeward, and finding on arrival that the captain was still absent, Lady Georgina wrapped the spur up in silver paper, and ordered it to be put on his table.

In justice to Herbert, we must say that he had in this instance been an unwilling listener to the conversation of the three friends. That he should have been incensed at Miss Dacres's tirade was no marvel, being of that unhappy temper which, instead of flashing fiercely for the moment and subsiding into its former tranquillity, lies darkling, when excited by injury, in the bosom of its ill-fated possessor, till revenge shall have quenched its fires. His better reason in vain suggested to him the folly of allowing himself to be moved by a few insolent words from a thoughtless woman, for in this light did he really try to place the silly affair; and after many resolutions made and broken, to treat her with silent contempt during the time he might remain at Blore Abbey, his bad heart

persisted in demanding vengeance, which, as it turned out, he never had an opportunity of gratifying.

His morning's ramble was taken up with these thoughts, and as he walked in the vicinity of our trio, he was about to strike into the path by which they were approaching, when he heard their voices near him, and his own name mentioned. He now wished, if possible, to get away unobserved, fearful of incurring the character of a listener, and turned quickly to escape; but the path here ran for some distance in a straight line, and he plunged aside into the thicket, leaving part of his spur behind him, from its getting entangled in a hazel bush. He was, however, not aware of his loss, till having gained another path he missed its little clink, and on examination discovered he was not "doubly armed" in the Achillean part, and retracing his steps, he arrived opposite the spot where he had left the spur as our hero picked

it up; and was within half-a-dozen yards of Hyde, with his eyes fixed upon him through the copse-wood, as he uttered the two or three wise saws before mentioned. It was then he inwardly cursed the spirit of dandyism which induced him to put on that particular pair of boots with such fragile persuaders, to rusticate amongst the savage wilds of Blore, as he termed them.

“ Why had he brought curricie boots into these sylvan solitudes, instead of keeping them for Brighton, where he intended going, and at which place they would be more duly appreciated than amongst these people. He would be ruined with Georgina; he would stand no chance whatever now.” He returned slowly to the house in no very enviable mood, after making these sage reflections, and his temper was by no means improved at the recollection that these very boots had been assumed with the idea of accompanying the heiress Dacres in her proposed equestrian excursion; for Herbert,

although he had such a contempt for archery, thought it no harm to have two strings to his bow.

On regaining his room, he of course found the lost treasure. Lady Georgina had not honoured him with a direction, and he was consequently ignorant as to which of the three he should make his ironical thanks to for this piece of attention, and at length resolved not to be the first to mention the subject; for although his conscience clearly acquitted him of having acted wrong, he was aware circumstantial evidence was strong against him. He might in this instance have said with Autolycus, "Though I am not naturally honest, yet I am sometimes so by chance."

During the absence of Hyde and Georgina in their walk, and at the return of the marquis from the farm, that most noble lord had with his marchioness a long conversation about their daughter and our hero.

Georgina, Lady Malmesbridge remarked, was

placed in a trying and very delicate situation. Every body must see the attachment that subsisted between the young couple, and the sooner an explanation was brought about, the better, as, if Hyde really meant to propose, Mr. Nugent would of course at once say what settlements he could make upon his son, and if they were not such as would support their daughter in a style suitable to her rank and expectations, of course Lord Malmesbridge, she said, would put a decided negative upon the match. As matters now stood, it was only keeping Georgina from receiving more advantageous proposals. A good deal of conversation followed this most motherly opening, but as it was neither very interesting or very conclusive, we choose to omit it.

That horrid word settlement! money—trash! Oh, that if one had millions, all pecuniary affairs might be arranged and secured, unknown to the parties most interested in the contract; for at the very mention of the vile worldly terms settlement, establishment, jointure, provision for

children ;—dreadful ! away goes love, at least the exquisite and beautiful polish, the lustrous brightness of it, when Damon and Phyllis were all in all to each other, ere the rose's pearly dew had been shaken from the bud, and the base and gross mercantile *bargain* had been talked of, and struck between fathers and mothers, or uncles and guardians ; or can it be possible, Venus, oh, Cupid, Hymen, and all the love and marriage gods and goddesses, can it, I say, be possible, that the ethereal essence, the bright unearthly being, the idol of the soul, the lady herself, has ever become the degraded thing that interferes, or imposes conditions which must be *sine qua nons* in the fulfilment of vows sworn, and troth plighted in a manner as solemn and as binding (pardon us for ending thus seriously what we so lightly begun), as had it been done at the high and holy altar ?

Too often, we fear, has this been the case. We will put it candidly to the reader who is qualified to answer, if when, after being blessed

by the long wished-for reply to his sigh and hopes, he was not horrified at the revolting idea of settlements, with their long train of *et ceteras*, which came to tarnish the glory of the hitherto unalloyed, disinterested, and beautiful passion, that subsisted between him and the woman for whom he felt, that to part with existence would give him more of pleasure than of pain : will he not inwardly confess, that a certain little 'Cupid took divers and sundry flights and circles in the air, probably to try the length of his chain, by which he had so long been confined in the region of the heart? and though expected to return and lie as close as ever, he still kept somewhat aloof. But let that pass.

Happily for the pair in whom we take so strong an interest, they knew not of the marchioness's plannings, and needless agitations, and surmises, and doubts, and wonderings, and all the rest.

As for Hyde, we have seen that Mr. and Mrs.

Nugent had discovered his passion for Lady Georgina, but they let him take his own time to come to an explanation; and the reason of his reluctance to do so we have also seen, namely, the state of his pecuniary affairs. Indeed, Mrs. Nugent never thought of interfering with Hyde's attachments or plans: she had settled her daughter even beyond her most sanguine expectations, and she left her son to the *surveillance* of his father, although she of course trusted he would never make a bad match.

Louisa had, indeed, done better than numbers of much higher rank and aim, who, with the most exalted ideas, had, at the beginning of the campaign, perhaps fixed their hopes upon a duke; and, as the season advanced, had lowered their price, and gone regularly down the ladder two steps at a time: for instance, in May they would have taken an earl; in June, a baron; and by the first of July, if still in town, perhaps a commoner, if he had money. Others, not so

high-minded, first began with a marquis: viscount, baronet succeeded; and the fair were perhaps obliged to seek their native shades without having had the refusal of a plain mister. Sad stuff this! is it not? Very true though for all that.

Lord and Lady Malmesbridge came to the determination, at the end of their *tête-à-tête*, to give the young people an opportunity of seeing as much of each other as possible, to let things take their course, and act accordingly; and no doubt this was as wise a thing as they could do, since it was the only plan that remained open to them.

At dinner, Lady Georgina was once or twice upon the point of alluding to the subject of the spur, but something occurred to prevent her, and the affair passed over for a time unheeded. Hyde thought not of it. He only experienced delight at the admiration that Georgina, without putting herself forward, seemed to excite by her conversation and beauty; and the atten-

tions every man at table seemed anxious to pay her, when any the slightest opportunity offered, made him feel proud without being jealous. No, no; there was no room for jealousy. Georgina was no flirt, no coquette—that species of animal without a heart—she was none of this; and as the ladies rose and departed, what secret pride was his, what pleasure, to know that the beautiful creature whom all eyes looked to as almost a superior being, was his—his! that for him only she existed! His eye still rested on the closed door in a fit of abstraction, as if he yet beheld the folds of her drapery, and the exquisite outline of her figure, till some observation from Lord William recalled him to himself. But he had no soul for conversation: the bottle passed him unheeded; the dessert went, untouched; he thought of nothing but the one dear image which, sleeping or waking, was always uppermost in his mind; he cared for nothing that did not in some degree attach to her.

CHAP. VII.

Regretter ce que l'on aime est un bien, en comparaison de vivre avec ce que l'on hait.

LA BRUYERE.

LET us now take a look at our friend Moyle on the other side of the water, where (alas! for the short-sightedness of us mortals) he and his blooming spouse were not quite so happy as each party had anticipated before they became one. The billing and cooing of these turtle-doves soon became pecking and scolding.

Mrs. Moyle, who had never been in Ireland, was marvellously disappointed in the castle that

was to be her residence for the remainder of her life. The neighbourhood was thin, and the neighbours such as, in her opinion, she could derive neither comfort nor enjoyment from associating with. Wild and *outré*, they were still too kind to be laughed at. What people she had come amongst! "Oh! England," would she mentally exclaim, "why did I ever leave thy smiling, beautiful, flowery, civilized plains, for this wild, barbarous country, where bog and mountain combat for the predominance; where trees grow not, where the rushing fury of the rivers is emblematic of the murderous disposition which hangs out its betraying sign on the dark visages of its people; where civility and refinement are swallowed up in boisterous mirth and ruffian *bonhomie*; and where a rude hospitality seems to be the only virtue which remains to the inhabitants of the soil!"

These repinings were not made in secret only: poor Moyle was doomed to hear them all; and not only was he wounded in this par-

ticular, but the beauty and elegance of his new approach failed to attract the notice, or when pointed out to elicit the praises, of his *cara sposa*. "This was the unkindest cut of all." In this he had centered all his hopes of gaining the approbation of Mrs. Moyle for his castle and grounds; it was his *dernier ressort*, all others failing, by which he trusted to wed her somewhat implacable disposition to the residence of which he had made her mistress; and great therefore was his disappointment, that even this darling project, so long thought of, now accomplished, should, while it drew down the panegyrics of a surrounding neighbourhood, be unsuccessful with the one being, to please whom, like a true and honest-hearted Irishman, had been the main spring of his every action since their union.

Mrs. Moyle, we must say, was unwise, as well as ungenerous, to exhibit this cold, repining spirit. It was as impolitic as it was ungrateful; for not only by treating the neigh-

bouring gentry *de haut en bas* did she make enemies, and deprive herself of what she would have found a kind, warm, and friendly circle, but by her melancholy and dispiriting manner, all assumed since her transportation, as she termed it, she bade fair to drive her husband from his natural home, to seek society where it was undamped by passive indifference, and exchange for the merry bowl and cordial grasp of the fox-hunter, the silent meal and listless salute of an almost tomb-like home and statue-like wife.

Perhaps the idea we have embodied may have struck Moyle when he exclaimed one day at dessert, after half an hour's kindness and playfulness had been expended in the vain attempts to educe a remark, or a reply, "Zounds, Madam, you sit there like patience on a monument, supping with Don Giovanni!" saying which, he rose, and kicked his chair down with great effect. Mrs. Moyle, not deigning to answer, got up and left the room.

We must confess our friend Narcissus was

not a man of the world, perhaps had not the knowledge of an English school-boy; but Mrs. Markham, while she yet was Mrs. Markham, had had ample time to make this discovery, and therefore she ought not afterwards to have laid herself open to the chance of this odd medley of Shakspeare and the Italian Opera being fulminated against her, or have resented it when it was.

This was the beginning of evil. Perpetual jars, at first slight but increasing progressively in acrimony, now took place between the happy pair. There were faults on both sides doubtless, but mostly on that of the lady of course. In truth, the good heart of Narcissus did not long permit him to show or feel ill-humour.

Mrs. Moyle either would not receive her husband's friends, or she gave them so forbidding a reception, that they, the ladies at least, took good care that their visits should only be annual, and that in compliment to a man whom they had known from childhood, and who was

universally, if we except by his wife, beloved and respected.

Things had long been in this state ; when they received a letter from Horace St. Quentin, announcing his arrival in Dublin, and by return of post an invitation to Castle Moyle was despatched. It was agreed that he should come down as soon as a reasonable time had elapsed, after making his bow at head-quarters. He was to bring "lots of cigars" with him, and his musical instruments, one or two at least of the latter, for his whole stock would have occupied the Kilkenny mail, inside and out.

Mrs. Moyle was somewhat cheered at the idea of an *Englishman's* coming to their house, and a musical one too, for she was fond of sweet sounds ; but the idea of cigars filled her with horror.

"Do, Mr. Moyle," said she, "write,—if you can, and tell him not to bring any cigars. I am sure it will make me quite ill."

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" Oh," said Moyle, " you shall not be annoyed with the smoke, dear. What did I build that snug little room off the hall for, but to enjoy my cigar with St. Quentin? Haven't I been plastering with brick and mortar for the last six weeks on purpose? knocking down, and building up,—By the powers, I might as well tell him not to come at all!"

" Well, I shall be ill, and then you'll be sorry. Dr. — who's the man with the unpronounceable name?"

" Geoghegan," said Moyle.

" — told me I was not suffer the slightest excitement, and I am sure I can never bear smoking." Here she grew pathetic.

" Well," said Narcissus, " who's going to smoke you?"

The lady, by her contemptuous and angry look, apparently meditated an unpleasing reply, but Moyle stopped her mouth with a kiss.

" Come, be a good girl," said he, " sit down there, and play me the fox-hunter's jig." And

he began to skip about the room in his top-boots, which he had put on, as it was a rainy day, to give them an airing. The lady played not however, and Moyle "whistled as he *danced*, for want of thought."

Horace St. Quentin started a day or two sooner than he had given the Castle Moyle people reason to expect, owing to some other officer having joined, and thus released him from stupid Dublin.

He drove down in his tilbury by easy stages, that he might have the better opportunity of seeing the country. He was about two miles from the old castle, when he caught the first view of its towers, from the summit of a hill he had just ascended. The day, though in August, was rainy past hope, and the prospect not such as to impress him with a very favourable idea of the country he had come to be a sojourner in.

St. Quentin stopped to breathe his horse near an ancient ruin, which occupied a very con-

manding position. It had formerly been the residence, most likely, of some Milesian chief, but the mournful wind now kept up a dismal and fitful howling through the shattered walls and arched windows, as if in lamentation for the days gone by, and the rude and warlike inhabitants, wild as its own ravings, to whose memory not even the tribute of a stone remained.

A tall and dark-looking peasant, wrapped in a grey fringe coat, and surrounded by a groupe of ragged children, came out from a kind of shed, which showed its humble thatch under the shelter of the frowning ruins.

"A fine daah, your honour," said the man, by way of greeting to the traveller, whose horse stood panting and smoking after the steep ascent.

"A fine daah."

"Fine!" said St. Quentin. "I don't know what you call a bad day in Ireland, if this is a fine one."

“Ogh, it’s an élégant one for the pratees. The country’s been destroyed with the drought. Is it to the castle you’re going?”

“Yes,—Castle Moyle.”

“Sure it’s that I mane; and a great place it is *thin*, entirely; though this belongs to the masther too.”

“Is Mr. Moyle your master, then?”

“Sure and he is; that’s I’m a tinnant of his, and does work for him odd times, now and again; and a good landlord he is, that’s thrue for him, and does’nt distriss the poor man for his rint, nor take it from him when he has ’nt it to pay. Ogh, he’s the raal gentleman!”

“What’s the name of this old castle?” asked St. Quentin, always interested about ruins, and music, and every thing wild and beautiful. Not that there was much beauty about the one he was then examining; but he thought how well an Æolian harp would fit into one of the loop-holes, and how grand would be the effect at night! “What’s the name of this old castle?”

“ Castle Morrough. Won’t your honour come into my cabin, and keep the fire warm ; for the rain has made the air cowld, and I’ll throw my big coat over the horse to keep him dthry. Ógh, he’s a fine horse *thin*, God bless him.* And he patted the animal’s neck.

St. Quentin declined the invitation so hospitably given, but promised to give the man a call some other day. He was at present in a hurry to get to the castle.

“ Your name’s Captain St. Quentin, your honour?” said the peasant.

“ Yes. How did you know that?”

“ Sure I heard the masther telling Mich Donoghue, the ould groom that was, to turn out two of the horses, and make room for yours, yesterday. Ogh by the powers, it’s an elegant place you’re going to then, and a nice gentleman is Mr. Moyle, barring his wife, that doesn’t

* The lower people in Ireland always utter a benediction on a horse, when they praise or caress him.

seem to like Ireland at all, any how. Bad luck to her, why couldn't she have stopped away; so she'd have lit the master's come, we didn't care. Who ax'd her here at all?"

By this St. Quentin perceived that all was not right at the castle, and his anticipations of passing a pleasant time there became much less sanguine. If Mrs. Moyle, thought he, dislikes Ireland, she no longer enjoys the sun of her husband's favour. However, he did not wish to encourage the tenant in his animadversions on the wife of his landlord, and drove off.

Mr. Quilty, for such, as he informed the captain, was his name, insisted, however, upon showing him the way to castle Moyle, *malgré* the protestations of St. Quentin, that he could very well find it out himself, and would not take him so far from home. Quilty kept running for some time by the side of the horse, with his coat-tails under one arm: here and there he made short cuts off the road, crossing fields, leaping walls and ditches with great ac-

tivity, and again joining the captain at a given point.

The nearest gate of entrance to the castle from this road was that of the stable-yard, and as it was raining heavily, St. Quentin waived the ceremony of going round to the new approach, which Paddy Quilty wanted him very much to do; himself having been one of the three hundred who distinguished themselves at that Thermopylæ, though he was not the only survivor, and he was consequently a little conceited of the grand work. Finding the captain inflexible, however, he gave a boy directions to call some one to look after the horse, which he observed would stand there "quiet enough" after so long a journey, and invited St. Quentin up to the back door, where he knocked for some time before an answer could be elicited. At length, the man put his eye to the key-hole, and seeing a petticoat at a distance, began to vociferate lustily to the person who he thought wore it.

"Peggy, Peggy, here's the captain come. Open the door, Peggy."

"Arrah what a bother you keep wid your Peggy!" answered the lady inside, in no very sweet terms. "Sure I'm not Peggy at all. I've no pegs about me to hang your fool's cap on. Yerrah, wasn't I christened Nelly?"

"Ogh then, by my faith, but you're Nelly sure enough," said Paddy, with the quickness of his country. "The divil of such a knell and clather I ever heard, as you keep wid that brazen bell of a tongue. Arrah will you be keeping the captain here all daah in the wit? By jagers, I wisht I had a bit of an oak plant, I'd knock the ould door into smithereens in no time."

"Why then, I haven't got the kay," screamed the termagant. "Bad luck to you, Paddy Quilty, can't you be afther taking the gentleman round to the front door?"

"Is it in all the rain?" said Paddy. "But come, sir," continued he, "we must jog, and

see if you can get in at the grand door, in the middle of that biggest tower on one side, that looks so small forenent the bigger ones."

St. Quentin was more fortunate in his attack on this side of the castle, and the door being opened, he rewarded Quilty with half-a-crown for his civility and trouble, and wished him good day.

"Welcome to Castle Moyle, my dear fellow!" shouted its hospitable owner, as he came to meet St. Quentin in the hall.

"Here I am," said his guest, "come, as you see, *sans ceremonie*, and expecting to find you and Mrs. Moyle *en famille*. I am a day or two sooner than I told you to look for me, but the fact is——"

"So much the better, so much the better," interrupted Narcissus. "What will do for two will do for three, and we'll ask O'Neale over from Ballyvoolan to make a fourth; though, poor fellow, the day is rainy, and he enjoys very bad health."

St. Quentin requested there might be no one asked to meet him, as he should prefer merely their society to all others. "And as I know you are a plain fellow, Moyle," continued he, recollecting the invitation at Cheltenham, "I shall stand the better chance of being pardoned, if this potent fire of Kilkenny coal, and a bottle of your good port, added to the effects of my journey, should induce me to take a chance nap after dinner."

"Pshaw! man, not a word about 'it,'" said Moyle. "Liberty Hall, you know; drink what you please, and go to sleep if you like, or to bed when you choose. We won't ask Mr. Neale over till to-morrow. Have you brought the cigars?"

"Forgot them, by Jove!"

Moyle thought of the snug little smoking room, and looked blank. He recollected the objections of his wife, and his countenance cleared up.

"I can send for them by the mail though,"

said St. Quentin; "my servant knows where they are——"

"By no means," said Narcissus; "for now I think of it, Mrs. Moyle says smoking will be unpleasant to her; so perhaps it is as well you have not brought them."

The lady of the castle now entered, and welcomed the captain with great kindness; nor was her greeting the less sincere that the cigars had been left behind; a piece of intelligence very soon communicated by her husband.

"I hope you came by the new approach, Captain St. Quentin," said Mrs. Moyle, smiling.

"No, indeed," replied the captain; "the rain was so unkind as to deprive me of that pleasure, notwithstanding the solicitations of Mr. Quilty, who accompanied me from his house to show the way to the castle. But I hope to have an opportunity of looking over the grounds to-morrow, with my friend Moyle for my *cicerone*."

"That you shall," said Moyle, rubbing his hands with delight at the anticipation of showing his place to some one who was possessed of sufficient good taste to appreciate its various beauties.

"So Quilty came with you from Knock-na-Morrrough!" continued he.

"Is that the name of the old castle?" said St. Quentin. "Oh, yes; I recollect."

"No, not the name of the castle, but the name of the hill," replied his friend. "Recollect that in Ireland knocks are hills, loughs are lakes, sheives are mountains, and kils are churches, or burying-grounds; so if you hear any of the country people talking about Kilknock Moyle, which was formerly Kilknock-Dermott, you are not to think there is a conspiracy against my life, but that they mean the church on the hill of Dermott, who was the primitive possessor of this castle and the lands for many miles around, which latter I wish his successor was also."

“Have you brought all your musical instruments with you, Captain St. Quentin?” asked Mrs. Moyle.

“One or two,” said he. “I am afraid, if I had trusted the double bass out of my sight, it would have been heard in another kind of crash from that which it has been accustomed to; and there was scarcely room for it in the tilbury. But I am glad to perceive by that grand piano-forte, that *you* have not given up music.”

“Oh,” said Mrs. Moyle, “I scarcely ever touch it now. There is not a soul in the neighbourhood that has a musical idea; no one but Mr. Moyle to listen to me.”

“Oh, by the powers,” said her husband, “there isn’t a creature in the barony that can tell G sharp from A flat.”

“It would puzzle Cramer,” observed St. Quentin.

“It is puzzling, as you observe,” rejoined

Narcissus ; "for the Irish are reckoned in musical nation."

"I believe," said Mrs. Moyle, looking at her watch, "it is nearly dinner-time. Mr. Moyle will you show Captain St. Quentin his room? You will not find the prospect very enlivening, Captain St. Quentin ; but I hope you will be comfortable."

Moyle led the way up the stone stairs, and ushered his guest into a well-furnished though not large room, where the red-faced house-maid was putting the things in order for the tenth time, and the footman was arranging the port-manteau and gig-box. They had neither of them been farther from the castle in their lives than the nearest post-town, and now stared their fill at the real live captain of dragons, whose approach had been heard the whole way across the stone hall and up the stairs, as they "rang to the warrior's clanking stride ;" and whose long fixed spurs, black mustachios, and

braided frock coat, filled them with wonder. Moyle turned them both out, begged St. Quentin not to make any great toilette, and left him, after seeing that all his wants were supplied, and pointing out, the new approach, which the windows commanded a view of; not, in his mind, so dreary a prospect as that of his spouse.

The dinner which Moyle observed would do for three, would have *done* for three-and-twenty, had they swallowed all the viands that were prepared. The table groaned under a truly hospitable Irish meal; not that there had been any addition made on account of the guest, but it was a regular system, and one which Mrs. Moyle, with her notions of taste, without wasteful profusion, had in vain tried to change. Moyle would have plenty. "Feast to-day and starve to-morrow," was his maxim. The cook also could not be persuaded that "a little and good" was better than a host of ill-dressed dishes, and imagined that quality was of small

consequence, where that defect in her *cuisine* was supplied by quantity. Not that she had any so very contemptible an opinion of her own powers as an *artiste* either.

St. Quentin was almost astounded at the endless array of servants, as they entered with the second course, coming in at one door and going out at another, receiving dishes outside, and again entering; thus performing a continued round, like the long procession at Astley's, where a few are made by these means to appear hundreds. In like manner, at Castle Moyle three or four men performed the apparent duty of three or four times the number; their gaudy green and gold liveries according ill with their ungainly persons, shock heads of hair, and fearful open mouths. One fellow seemed as if he had a great mind to swallow two boiled turkeys smothered in onions, which were served upon one dish. Another appeared, by his haste and his stiff porcupine hair, to be afraid that the roasted peacock flanked by two pairs of guinea

fowls would fly away from the shield, it might almost be termed, for dish would be too insignificant: a term for the vessel on which he bore them into the room.

But we must not laugh at Moyle's dinner; we would rather laugh *with* him, seated at his hospitable board. The lady, soon after the removal of the cloth, sought her bower, and left the gentlemen to enjoy their wine, and talk over old times. It would have appeared singular to any person who had just witnessed St. Quentin's determined contempt of Moyle some two years before, upon their first meeting at Nugent Hall, the cordiality which now subsisted between them. It must, however, be remembered, that if, upon their incipient acquaintance, the lancer looked down upon our little Irishman, smoking *tête-à-têtes*, &c. had soon brought them upon a more friendly footing.

The Nugents were of course mentioned, a subject which at length made Horace pensive and unconversable; and Moyle, thinking the

journey had done his friend up, did not much press another bottle of claret, before they retired to join the lady. Music being proposed, Mrs. Moyle, expatiated upon the delightful singing of Miss Nugent, or Lady Iford rather, and Miss St. Quentin.

“Oh! I do think,” exclaimed she, “that their performance of *Ah Perdona* was the most exquisite thing I ever heard in my life.”

This was a blow to St. Quentin’s spirits for that evening. It brought to his recollection a thousand things that he would at the moment rather not have thought of. The garden scene with that darling sister, whose health was now so sadly changed, came upon his mind with all its accompanying thoughts of vengeance. His blood boiled afresh at the conduct of Hyde Nugent, and he was glad to seize the first opportunity of retiring to his room.

The next morning was sunny bright; the country wore quite a different appearance from that which the rain had given it on the day be-

fore ; and with infinite delight, after taking St. Quentin to the stables, and showing him “ the first mare in Ireland,” with divers other steeds well known in the Kilkenny hunt, Moyle mounted him upon a little Irish horse, which, he said, would carry him over a five-foot wall, or a double ditch, with any hunter in the kingdom, and took his guest the round of the demesne, pointing out the various beauties and advantages of his new approach, which the captain thought he dwelt rather long upon.

A good and substantial breakfast fitted them to encounter a proportionate share of exercise. They visited divers people in the neighbourhood, some of whom lived ten or twelve miles off, Irish miles too, and altogether completed a ride of near thirty.

Thus passed the time pleasantly enough. Mrs. Moyle recovered her spirits in a wonderful degree, and as she could, when it pleased her, be excessively agreeable, and was always ladylike, St. Quentin with music and the warmest hos-

pitality, found his present quarters quite as much to be liked as those of Dublin in summer.

The reflections of Horace upon home affairs were of no pleasant description. Doubt had taken hold on his mind as to the intentions of young Nugent with regard to Augusta; and though at the moment of discovering her passion he had secretly resolved to investigate the affair immediately, and oblige Hyde to state what were his intentions, or whether he had any, a more mature deliberation convinced him of the impropriety of going rashly to work. Besides, having heard of Hyde's unpleasant affair at Oxford, he resolved to give him time to renew his addresses to Augusta, before he gave publicity by a quarrel, or the chance of it, to the fact of his sister's having been neglected.

CHAP. VIII.

Miranda. My husband then?

Ferdinand. Ay, with a heart as willing

As bondage e'er of freedom: here's my hand.

Miranda. And mine, with my heart.

TEMPEST.

LETTERS from the St. Quentins at Brighton the Nugents at Blore continued to inform of Augusta's sad state of health. Her physicians hinted to Lady Caroline that the child was the seat of disease, and that no bodily affliction afflicted her daughter but what was inseparable from such a cause. If that penetrating man had suspected what the *primary* cause was, she either dared not reveal the secret, or

had too much tact to communicate it, till she should make certain of every thing, even to her husband.

Hyde had not been without letters from his friends Burgoyne and Bridgewater; the former of whom expressed his determination not to revisit England for some years, and the latter, under the ban of a less voluntary exile, had left Lisbon for the Brazils, or at least was to sail the day after his letter was despatched.

“Poor Miss Montague!” thought Hyde, as he read this intelligence; “that *portrait char-mant* will be the only consolation now left you!”

The party at Blore continued to seek amusement, each in his or her own particular way. Archery was the rage with some, riding with others, fencing amongst some few of the younger men, politics with the elder: then there was farming, flirting, walking, dancing, cards, billiards, and music—music, such as the gods might listen to and applaud, was there. Louisa had not lost her voice, as we have before said,

with the name of Nugent," neither had she grown fine or disobliging. She and Lady Elizabeth Capel, with the occasional assistance of Georgina, all blessed with voices calculated to enrapture the coldest ear, caused that ecstasy in the true lovers of music, which you wish others to thrill with in the same proportion as yourself, but of which also you are convinced that the power of language is inadequate to convey one hundredth part of the meaning, the soul-felt delight; while in breathless agitation you listen to the perfection of harmony, proceeding from lovely female lips.

Dancing was also to be seen at Blone in great force; and, save where Lady Luxury, failing in her *écarté* scheme, was preposterous enough to stand up in the quadrille, the graces shed their influence over the gay and brilliant square without reserve. "Sir Gilbert Opal, we fear, indeed we must except by the bye; for Belpas's lessons had been of little service to him, and he looked very much like a tom-fool, when he was

performing *cavalier seul*, with his mouth open, in the middle of the well-disciplined throng.

The Ladies Capel waltzed at parties of such an exclusive composition as the one now assembled at their uncle's; their waltzing also was *superbe*, and entered into with quite as much spirit, and an infinitely greater degree of grace, than that which distinguished many of the goodly reputed twirlers at Almack's, even Miss Tetotum herself. There is, in fact, a wide difference between taking an occasional tour in the waltz, at a select or small assembly, such as we have described, and the thorough-paced, regular, systematic whirligig, which is patronized by so many young ladies at every promiscuously crowded party.

The races at Torham were as yet three weeks off. They had, in fact, been earlier announced to the duchess than to the rest of the surrounding neighbourhood, from an anxiety on the part of the stewards to obtain her grace's patronage for their ball. The Dacres and her Ogle con-

tinued to beat up for volunteers ; and the duchess, who seldom knew her own mind, or remained in the same mind for four-and-twenty hours together, at length ceded to the pressing solicitations of the above-named couple, and surprised the company by an announcement of her *settled and fixed* resolution to go. Herbert thought she would deceive them yet ; but those who had previously refused their support to the ball, from the idea that the duchess would not favour it with her presence, now as suddenly found that there would be nothing to prevent their joining the rest of the party, though they rather feared a return of their colds, &c. &c. They did not wish to appear singular, and perhaps it might not be taken as well as could be wished, were they to keep away from a scene of such general festivity ; though it would certainly be awful to meet with the natives, and all the rest of it.

Dacres and the Sublime had undertaken to make it quite a select and exclusive thing ;

though how they were to bring about such a devoutly-to-be-wished consummation, puzzled the wisest.

Rolles had started for the north, taking care to apprise the Morning Post of his movements; and in a few days after his departure was seen under the head of "Changes," "Colonel Rolles from Blore Abbey, the seat of the Duke of Bolingbrook, for Grouse Lodge, the Earl of Tay's seat, in Aberdeenshire."

The Duke of Bamborough's quarters at Berwick were to be beat up on his return south, and thus he would have grouse, partridge, and pheasant shooting gratis, besides having his name in the Morning Post.

The heat of the weather had for some time prevented the purposed expedition to Brabazon Castle from taking place.

At length a cool breeze, and a refreshing shower of the night before, determined the party upon setting out, and riding or driving, as they liked best, with each lady a cavalier, they

ut on their travels. After specifying that Dacres drove the Ogle, that Captain Her- who, having in vain tried to secure a place ie side of Lady Georgina, was hemmed in ie two Miss Plantagenets, and secured for ide, much to his vexation, we have a right ive our attention to young Nugent and his bright, whom we need not more particularly ify. The elderly people were left at home ; young people therefore, without the super- m of a marflirt in the shape of a Dowager y Argus, consulted only their own inclina- s, and either rode on before, or dropped into rear.

nd shall our young friends be blamed, if r, in adopting the latter plan, took advan- e of the opportunity to open their hearts to h other ? Forbid it, love !

ady Elizabeth kindly doomed herself to en- e Sir Gilbert Opal's flattering attentions ing the greater part of the ride, he having wn jealous of Herbert, who was in what the

baronet thought his own proper place, by the side of the pretty Charlotte Plantagenet, taking this vain method of exciting pique in the fickle fair one.

The party was winding through one of those pleasant lanes whose cool shade, during the summer months, so delightfully chequers and varies the ground, which would otherwise offend the eye with its intense and uninterrupted glare. Hyde and Lady Georgina were the last of the party, and never had the latter looked more lovely than she now did in the eyes of the admiring Nugent, as they rode side by side. Mounted on a handsome bay horse, her fine figure showed to infinite advantage in her riding habit, and her luxuriant curls found their way beneath her hat, which, less invidious than the concealing architectural mass called a bonnet, displayed the perfect oval, the not-to-be-described *contour* of that beautiful face which had first won our hero's heart. The delight she felt in the exercise, and the pleasure she expe-

ienced from the company and conversation of him on whom her first young affections had been placed, caused a brilliancy of complexion and a vivacity of expression that enhanced its loveliness in a ten-fold degree.

Lady Georgina had not regular features: Nugent, it will be recollected, had endeavoured to describe them to his friend Burgoyne, and had failed. Her face, in fact, was like a fine piece of music, in which the performer prevents your knowing that you pass from one key to another by his art, so beautifully do they blend, so softly are the intermediate notes of harmony touched, that the ear knows not where it wanders, but feels that throughout its path is ecstasy. Or we might compare it to a picture, where the tints are so mellowed and mingled into each other, that the eye feels no transition in passing from one brilliant hue to another, so exquisitely are they graduated. It was in the contemplation of these features that Hyde was wrapt during the silence of a few minutes,

which preceded that effusion where the greatest compliment is paid to woman that the tongue of man can bestow, and on the answer to which hangs future happiness or despair. Hyde had his answer; but it was not in words that he obtained the long wished-for consent, to render him the most blissful of beings. They were some distance from their party, but they thought not of them, nor of any thing on earth but each other. Their souls were lifted above the world, and in the impassioned eloquence of love Hyde poured forth his feelings, and spoke to the heart of her whose devotedness was equal to his own. *Her* tongue was powerless, her eyes, while they answered his appeal, filled with tears, and her hand relinquishing itself to the fervency of him to whom she now surrendered herself, replied in the all-expressive language of affection, that she was his for ever.

At this interesting moment, while the hand of Georgina was locked in that of Hyde, a sud-

den turn of the road, as they walked their horses slowly along, brought them close to the side of Herbert, who had dismounted, and was to all appearance tightening his horse's girths. The hand of Georgina was quickly dropped, but not before Herbert had perceived young Nugent lift it to his lips; nor did the confusion of the young couple pass unnoticed by his penetrating glance. Hyde wished him at — we will not say where. Georgina certainly would have dispensed with his company at this moment, as at any other; and as to the captain's own feelings, we shall merely describe them as those of a man who, still loving a beautiful woman, and having once thought that he stood a fair chance of succeeding with her had it not been for the officious attentions of another, sees that other, himself having long since been repelled with disdain, receiving such proofs of affection from the woman whose love he had sought, as could leave no doubt on his mind that every thing would soon be arranged for

their marriage. Let those who have felt the stings of jealousy imagine his feelings.

There was a sort of smile upon the handsome face of Herbert, which an uninterested observer might have taken for that of good-nature: to Georgina, however, it appeared in its true light. She was indignant at the insulting expression which she, who had had many opportunities of studying his countenance, discovered lurking under its disguise; and she pulled forward her veil to shade her own face from observation. Hyde had of late been frequently annoyed with Herbert's intrusions and *espionnage*; but in justice to the guardsman we must say, that his conduct was often the effect of accident, not of choice; but whether intentional or otherwise, an occurrence of the kind is regarded with no very charitable feelings by the person whose seclusion has been thus invaded; and little was Hyde either inclined to pardon it, or to put any but the most unfavourable constructions upon a line of conduct so opposite to that which should charac-

erize a gentleman and a man of honour. That he former should also be the latter is an accepted maxim ; but that it is often, very often the case, that the person who bears the one title is wholly destitute of claim to the other, we have every day convincing proofs. Herbert was a strong instance of this, for in manner and accomplishments he was a gentleman ; but we are obliged to confess that in honourable feeling he was sadly deficient. On the present occasion, however, Herbert had been actuated rather by a wish of getting away from the Misses Plantagenet, than that of becoming a spy upon the actions of Hyde and Lady Georgina. Wearied to death with the affected folly of those two young ladies, he had hit upon the expedient of cutting with a pen-knife, unperceived by them, the strap of his horse's girth. In a moment he had dismounted, and drawing the animal up to the road-side to repair the pretended accident, the young ladies were obliged to proceed, and leave the captain to himself.

The damage was easily repaired, for as he had cut the strap close up to the buckle, he had merely to let it out a hole or two on the opposite side. However, as he did not wish to come up with even the last of the line of Plantagenet, he contrived to occupy himself an unreasonable length of time in accomplishing what ought to have been the work of one minute. He completed his task as Hyde and Lady Georgina rode past, and mounting his horse he joined them, and attempted to enter into conversation; but his efforts failed. He was himself, in fact, tortured with feelings which he could not smother. Hyde was provoked, Lady Georgina annoyed, and the trio in silence set forward to join the rest of the party. As they came up, Miss Dacres, to whom Herbert bore no great love, attacked the guardsman for being a mar-plot, in a tone quite loud enough to be heard by all the party, though as if she did not wish it to go further than the ears of him to whom she addressed herself. She also endeavoured to draw

the Ogle into the scrape, by using all that species of raillery, talking *at* one person and *to* another, which she so well knew how to manage, and *by* which means many a heartless woman has been the cause of a duel and a life lost; lives more valuable than those of either Foley Ogle or Wyndham Herbert. But Foley, although a man of sufficient spirit, had no idea of being drawn into a quarrel with Herbert or Nugent, the latter of whom he had seen enough of to be convinced that he was not the person to be trifled with, and he could perceive from Herbert's lowering visage, and the portentous character of his eye-brow, that neither was he at present in a likely humour to take any jest in good part. On these occasions Ogle liked to know his man, and had it been Sir Gilbert, whom his goddess had taken it into her sportive imagination to quiz, he would have entered into the spirit of the jest, and bandied witticisms with Miss Daeres without mercy; but as it was he kept aloof, leaving that young lady to fight

her own battle, as she was very well qualified to do ; feeling quite sure that she would come off with flying colours. Disgusted with all she said and did, however fascinating her manner and language might have been to others, Hyde left her chariot wheels, and proposed a canter to Lady Elizabeth, who, delighted to get away from Sir Gilbert, having long since heard the last of the jokes with which he had that morning stored his budget, she gladly accepted his challenge, and took advantage of the broad green turf by the road-side, which presented quite a carpet to their horses' feet, to put her steed upon his mettle. Georgina had been accosted by Lord St. Columb, who, though he found her ladyship rather *distract*, was far from guessing the cause ; and although he perceived that there must be something unusual to cause an abstraction so very foreign to her, he good-naturedly forbore to dive into its source, and rather tried to conceal her mistakes than to make even herself sensible of them.

At length the party arrived at Brabazon Castle. This was a ruin of considerable magnitude ; one of the lions of that part of the world which every body went to see,—a circumstance which took off in the minds of Foley Ogle and Miss Dacres considerably from the pleasure of visiting the place, they setting themselves up as beings of a superior order to the rest of the world, and priding themselves upon doing what nobody else did, saying what nobody else said, and in fact being singular in every possible way. They certainly were oddities ; but let that pass. Lord and Lady Iford had been too short a time married to be tired of each other's society as yet ; they went therefore together in a phaeton to the place of rendezvous, but although they started at the same time with the rest, they had no idea of going at the same slow pace, and had wandered about the ruins, admiring and sketching for an hour before any of the others arrived. An advanced guard of servants had been despatched early in

the morning with all requisites for a *déjeuner à la fourchette*; every thing, therefore, was prepared when the main body came up, and cold viands of every description, with champagne and all other kinds of wine, stood ready on a sort of rustic table; the root supporters of which protruded from under the magnificent damask table-cloth, to the damage of Sir Gilbert's shins; who, intent upon sacrificing to the eating and drinking gods, more than once fell over the wooden legs of wounded dryads.

Foley Ogle had written a poem for the occasion, which after the repast he ascended a pinnacle of the ruined castle to recite; but a shower coming on just as he had placed himself in a becoming attitude, and was about to commence in the heroic vein, the audience were obliged to fly for shelter to another part of the building, and Apollo was thus left in a most ridiculous situation, not at all lessened by the difficulty and danger he experienced in descending from his pride of place; a far less easy

task on these occasions than the ascent, and now rendered more slippery and perilous by the rain. He was exposed all this time to the view of the party, and had the mortification to hear a loud peal of laughter at his expense, led by the cruel Dacres, at whose instigation he had composed the speech, and ascended the tower. He, however, reached *terra firma* in safety, inwardly vowing never more to be made a fool of by one who styled herself his colleague. Upon joining the unsympathizing knot of fashionables he found Sir Gilbert, whom Miss Dacres now openly called Goose Gibbie, seated on a heap of stones in a corner of the building with his boot off, ascertaining the extent of the damage his shin had sustained by coming in contact with the unyielding root table. Foley Ogle, by order of the lady, was obliged to give up his place in Miss Dacres's nondescript carriage to the suffering baronet, whose horse he mounted.

The contusion of Sir Gilbert was not the

only pain he had to suffer ; as Miss Dacres, with pretended sympathy and much mock gravity, gave him a lecture on the impropriety of so impetuous an attack upon and so decided a hankering after the good things of this world as he had evinced at the luncheon-table, and which had proved in fact the cause of his accident. She indulged him also with two fables and a fairy tale before they arrived at the abbey, the whole of which were easy of comprehension to a child of five years old. All Sir Gilbert could do was to swear at the table, including in his own mind the fair charioteer. None cared what they uttered before the Dacres, so long as it did not happen to be personal to her. She was in fact, as Lord William Capel said, " one of us," could pull a horse's mane, and cut his tail, and on occasion take her own part. This qualification, however, had not as yet been put to the test. Altogether the party went off, the latter part at least, as most affairs of the kind do, heavily. The rain had damped the ardour

of the gentlemen, and the ladies were tired and out of spirits. Foley Ogle on the return had quickly begun to feel uncomfortable sensations. Opal's stirrups were rather long for him, but he would not have them altered, protesting that he could do very well without any; he therefore, at starting, had thrown them across the pommel of the saddle, but the iron coming in contact with his upper leg, he was obliged to let them down, and before the Ogle's foot found its place in the stirrup, his instep was severely bruised, from the excusable wish Opal's horse evinced to get back to his stable; and as this prince of puppies had on that day as usual, when he did not purpose riding, sported tight pantaloons, thin shoes, and silk stockings, the better to display his Apollo legs, it may be imagined how very little satisfaction he derived from this unexpected equitation.

Hyde and Lady Georgina were silent during the whole of the ride back. Reflections, thoughts, and anticipations of future happiness,

so completely absorbed their minds, that all other conversation after that which had taken place in the first part of the morning, seemed "stale, flat, and unprofitable;" and unable now to resume that delightful species of communion, they found themselves quite unequal to the task of any other. Neither had Hyde an opportunity during the whole of that evening of again alluding to the morning's topic. A gentle pressure of the hand, given and returned, unperceived of all others, was the only proof of how the mind of each was engaged.

CHAP. IX.

Were it not as well to leave out "honour?"

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

AFTER the observations Herbert had made during the ride to Brabazon Castle, he thought himself justified in concluding that it was a done thing; the young couple were of course to be married. If confirmation of this were wanting, he had it in the fact of Hyde and Lord Malmesbridge being engaged in close conversation for more than half an hour that evening,

and afterwards Mr. Nugent and Lady Malmesbridge.

“Confirm’d, confirm’d!” thought he, “O, that is
stronger made,
Which was before barred up with ribs of iron!”

He lost no time in communicating this intelligence to the Misses Plantagenet, who soon spread it through the rest of the circle; though, indeed, the morning’s ride had given them, as they thought, ample proof of what was to be.

It is very odd that people cannot mind their own affairs, and leave in peace those who trouble not their heads about them. However, on this occasion, Herbert was immediately after sorry for what he had done. Do you think it was from any good feeling towards Hyde, or even Lady Georgina, reader? You are much mistaken! It was because he yet hoped there remained a chance of gaining her for himself; and he feared, should this come to her ears, and she should trace the report to him, his was

but a very slight chance of being again even noticed, much less received in the favoured light of a suitor. As it happened, the report did reach the ears of Lady Georgina; she did trace it to the source; and, not that she so very much cared about it, certain as she felt that no difficulty would attend their being united, the consequence was what Captain Herbert had anticipated, she scarcely deigned him a word during the next three or four days. Their next communication of any length was of no very pleasing description; but of this hereafter. On retiring to his room for the night, Herbert wrote the following letter to his friend Millefleurs:

Blore Abbey, August, 182—

Yours, my dear Adonis, reached me yesterday. It is an extraordinary epistle; but by what I can gather, there is nothing going forward, in the shape of *work* I mean, at Brigh-ton, in which it is likely that so distinguished

an artist as yourself will condescend to figure.— I rather fancy, my dear Don, that you must have commenced your letter before dinner, and ended it after; for the first part is soberly and reasonably written; but as to the conclusion, “ ’twould puzzle a conjuror ” to decipher its magical pot-hooks, and unravel its dark and mysterious allusions. Perhaps, however, *I* might have been rather *fresh* when I opened your precious scrawl, for there is no lack of “ the heart’s rain ” at Blore; and to read any letter a second time, is what I never was accused of in my life.

You inquire how your pigeon fares in these woody groves, and whether he has recovered feather since the half-plucking he got in town: my dear fellow, how could you let him slip so easily through your ^{little} fingers? The fact is, you trifled with him so long, that he got too knowing for you all. You should have stripped him at once of his plumage, instead of allowing that fire-eating fellow Burgoyne to force him out to

Chalk Farm ; the consequence of which was, that you lost him altogether. He seems well in cash now, but from a pigeon he has become a very turtle, and will not even take the trouble to pull straws, so lazy and *loving* has he become. Georgina Capel is the lady, as you may easily guess, from the incipient *penchant* he evinced when in town ; indeed, people say that he *is* to be married to her. I believe he has proposed and been accepted, and that Lord Malmesbridge will be so infatuated as to consent to the match, unless something speedily turns up. It is a pity his lordship has no friend to tell him what Nugent really is. If *I* were to take the office upon myself, it might be thought that I did so from interested motives ; for you know a certain person^{or} stood well in that^{'''} quarter, till that cursed affair of *La Ballerina* became blown, and then Lady M. chose to get stiff. I do not think Georgy would have cared about it much, and indeed I should still stand some chance if that fellow were any where else.

with his girl's face,—rather a humiliating confession certainly, but there is no accounting for depravity of taste. The fact is, the Nugents have regularly got hold of these people. First they played off their daughter upon Iford, who, *entre nous*, must be a very foolish fellow, or he would scarcely have bitten at the bait so easily ; and now old Nugent and Malmesbridge and Mrs. Nugent and the marchioness are upon the most affectionate terms possible. However, I do not yet despair.

There is much to amuse an uninterested spectator going forward at Blore. That great ass Opal is with us, and that fulsome blockhead Foley Ogle, the latter of whom makes a most consummate fool of himself, with that mad woman, half-blue, half-jockey, Penelope Dacres, Percie Dacres's sister : he was in the Coldstream, you recollect, and broke his neck last season. I wish some one would take her off, by all that's ugly ! Why don't you come here and try your luck ?—Give me all the news

of Brighton. The Bolingbrooks insist upon my staying with them some time longer, therefore I shall not be so soon as I expected.

Yours, ever,

WYNDHAM HERBERT.

Hon. Adonis Millefleurs,
—th Hussars,
Brighton.

When this letter was delivered to Millefleurs, that gallant officer was seated in his room at the cavalry-barracks, with his breakfast before him, consisting of the essence of green tea, which with a trembling hand he poured from a tea-pot filled two thirds up with the herbaceous material before water had been applied. This was assisted by more than one glass of brandy or mareschino, an invariable *chasse* with Millefleurs. About two o'clock there was a broil, or deviled turkey, made very hot with cayenne, &c., in the mess-room; but this is foreign to our purpose, and therefore to the tale.

In the afternoon's promenade on the Steyne,

Adonis, who had been sitting up the greater part of the night, and consequently looked half stewed, or parboiled, with red eyes and sunken cheeks, met as usual the St. Quentin party, and communicated to Augusta that he had just had a letter from a friend of his,—Herbert of the guards, whom he had expected down at Brighton, but that the Duke and Duchess of Bolingbrook, with whom he was then staying, would not consent to part with him.

Augusta knew not Captain Herbert, and, impatient for other intelligence, asked why Millefleurs told this to *her*.

“Patience! my dear creature,” said he, familiarly. “The fact is, I am going to tell you something that will interest you highly. It is about a friend of yours.”

Augusta felt herself colour, and turn pale, but expecting some dreadful intelligence, for Lady Caroline had lately heard from Mrs. Nugent at Blore, she made her mind up for the worst. Adonis perceived the change in

her countenance, and not knowing what to think, he forbore to proceed further with a communication which he now feared was of such a nature as must deeply wound her feelings. He therefore was obliged to tell her some trifling invention of his own about Lady Iford, whom he knew to be a very dear friend of Augusta's.

She felt somewhat relieved, but Adonis had turned it off so badly, and shuffled, and hemmed so, that she felt convinced he had not told her the truth, and determined, when they should meet in a more auspicious place than the Steyne, that he should not escape before he had disclosed the whole contents of Herbert's letter, as far as regarded any of her friends.

Augusta had certainly found benefit from the sea air and change of scene, but she derived little gratification from any thing like gaiety; in fact she revolted from it. Riding formed her chief, and indeed almost only amusement. Whisker had been sent for, and after being well

subdued, a very requisite measure to adopt, from the spirit of wildness his long run at grass had imbued him with, his fair mistress used to ride him over the downs almost daily. She was on these occasions sometimes joined by Adonis, or a stray brother of the same flock, for a number of the —th knew Horace St. Quentin, and all were anxious to pay attention to his family, especially where the pleasure of talking to and riding with such a pretty woman as Augusta combined itself with the civility intended. The lady in question, however, coveted not these honours: her father or her brother George was always with her, and she would have preferred being allowed to take her canter without having to talk upon subjects or with men she did not care about.

The news she had heard of Hyde's flirtations, as Millefleurs had stated, and his reported attachment to Lady Georgina Capel, all of which was set forth in a foregoing chapter, as may be supposed, had not passed from her mind.

She was in a state of the most dreadful uncertainty about him; for she could not, from the volatile rattling character of Adonis, thoroughly credit what he had said, and yet she felt it equally impossible to discard all belief of the fact from her mind. With all her devotedness of heart to Nugent, with all her cause for fearing that devotedness contemned or unheeded, yet her natural elasticity of spirits prevented her from becoming a silent and unornamental member of society; and though any one who had known her before love had blighted her earlier years, would now scarcely have recognized in the changed being before them, the once gay, lively Augusta St. Quentin, yet she still possessed a certain degree of fascination, though she never tried to please, which caused her to be an object of attention to many of the young men at Brighton, more than one of whom would have laid themselves and fortunes at her feet, had they received the slightest encouragement. A coronet might have encircled her brows, had she

pronounced the word ; but that word could never be given by Augusta, except to him, who had first won her heart, and then deserted her. Hers was the pure affection, beyond all price, which, once devoted to a being, however in the opinion of some unworthy, would never change, or recall its past wanderings from the object of first love to turn them towards another, although that faithless one might be lost to her for ever. Should she, thought Augusta in the enthusiasm of her heart, should she be inconstant because he was fickle? though he was treacherous, should she be false? should she give that love to another, which she had given to him as her soul's idol, the only one on earth she had thought worthy to possess it? Impossible!

While conflicting ideas and contradictory reports thus agitated her mind, must she be blamed if hope still found a place in her bosom? Alas! for the fallibility of the human heart, still clinging to its cherished passion, and feeding its flame with the unsubstantial food of

groundless hope! Such was, indeed, the case with Augusta. She reflected that while Hyde remained single, there was still a chance of his returning love. Oh! she thought, what a tender, devoted wife she should make him, might that happiness ever be her lot! To smooth the pillow of sickness, to assist him with her advice, her consolation, should he ever stand in need of these; to be wife, mother, sister, friend; to exist but for him, and to be his, and his only, in life and in death; these, she thought, should be her attributes.

Her lot might be, perhaps, to suffer for a time; but she recollected the consolatory words of the poet, which told her that

The course of true love never did run smooth;

and she felt sustained by the too often treacherous comfort which these words conveyed. Alas! how many have been deceived by applying the sentiment to themselves, when "true love" has been, however they might seek to persuade

themselves of the contrary, but on the one side. Augusta had, indeed, experienced some store of unhappiness; but her cup was not yet full. She had yet to learn the dreadful truth of Hyde's having proposed for Lady Georgina, and been accepted; which, when she understood (for she had surprised Millefleurs into a confession of this during a small party at her mother's), her senses for the moment forsook her.

She was, at the time when this intelligence fell like a thunderbolt upon her ear, sitting near the high part of the sofa, on a chair placed so as to aid her arm in the support of an aching head. That beautiful arm and head in a moment hung lifeless over the *chaise longue*. No sound escaped her lips but a deep sigh; none had perceived the revulsion of feeling but Adonis. A conviction of his own imprudence immediately flashed upon him; and unusual pity, regret, and a resolution to conceal from all others what, as the cause, but himself knew, found immediate place in his breast. An exclamation from him

called the attention of Lady Caroline, who was standing with her back towards him, talking to two young men. It was fortunately in an ante-room. Lady Caroline turned quickly round. "Shut that door, and lock it," said she, with great presence of mind, to Millefleurs, pointing to the door of communication between the rooms. "What has been the cause of this?"

Millefleurs whispered in her ear a few words.

"Shall I ring?" said one of the other men.

"For your life, no," said Lady Caroline. Then thinking she had been perhaps too energetic, she added, "There is no occasion; it is merely the heat of the weather. She has been very unwell of late. It is nothing. Bring me that jar; it has water in it, prepared for flowers which were never sent; bring it quickly."

The jar was brought, and water sprinkled on Augusta's face, and hartshorn and all the tribe of smelling salts applied.

Lady Caroline blessed herself that there were

“no odious women in the room” to trouble her with their officiousness. Augusta began to revive.

“Go,” said Lady Caroline, “before she sees you. Softly,—by that door. You are *men*, and require not these things to talk about. You will not mention it. Mr. Millefleurs, pray tell a servant to send my maid to me.”

The gentlemen made expressive signs, and left the room without noise; having at first assisted in placing Augusta in a horizontal position on the sofa.

“This was all Mr. Hyde’s work!” thought Millefleurs, when he got to his quarters. “He has then been trifling with that lovely girl’s affections, and has now deserted her for one of higher rank!” And the idea that the knowledge of this might be of service to his friend Herbert, induced him to assume the pen for the purpose of communicating the same. Besides, he thought he should be doing a good

action, and serving Augusta, whom he really felt for, by "flooring Nugent," if possible, in the other quarter.

In the mean time, Horace St. Quentin had been enjoying himself in Ireland: he had been visited and overwhelmed with kindness and hospitality by the surrounding gentlemen of the Castle Moyle neighbourhood, and by the owner of that castle he had been treated like a brother.

Now it is unfortunately too much the case in society, not only to connive at want of principle with regard to women, but to consider the misleading of a friend's wife rather a feather in a man's cap than otherwise, and consequently many men are induced, through a wish to gain credit with the world, to adopt this very agreeable method. Some do it *pour passer le temps*, without any love; some try how far they may go, for they can see the poor woman does not like her husband; others really fall in love with a beautiful woman, and do not mind sacrificing

the devoted wife's happiness,—for she is much more to be pitied than the husband, gainsay it who may,—provided they have got their names up, and stood a shot, or paid a few thousand pounds damages, and have for a few short months lived in a state of criminal existence with her, whom in the dreamy intoxication of their temporary raving they have considered :

—— their happiest choice, too late

Met, but already linked, and wedlock-bound.

In this last class we must place Horace St. Quentin, the only difference being that Mrs. Moyle was pretty, and not beautiful. Yes, reader, it was unfortunately the case, that he had fallen in love with his friend's wife ; and we pity him sincerely. We pity him, while we condemn. We mourn for her ; and for the third person, while we lament his situation, we congratulate him, as feeling a heaven in his mind, compared to the *peccant* pair, in thought,

if not in deed, who by their own dreadful dereliction from duty have raised a hell within their breasts, of which the husband, though stung with jealousy for the time, is, comparatively speaking, free. This is when some spark of honour condemns the course which the helpless, infatuated, on-driven man of sin is taking, which was the case with St. Quentin. His safety lay in flight, but this, as a soldier, he disdained to avail himself of.

Mrs. Moyle, though she loved not her husband, had yet great confidence in her own powers to withstand temptation. Alas! how weak, how frail are the most virtuous of us, when put to the test of a fiery ordeal! She had fallen, but for the timely arrival of a letter from the proud Lady Caroline St. Quentin to her son, telling of all she had discovered, forced from Augusta, and the news of Hyde Nugent's talked-of marriage with Lady Georgina Chapel. He received this dispatch while in the drawing-room at Castle Moyle, but

as yet he opened it not : it was tossed upon the table, and the page resumed which he had been reading ; but the letter again caught his eye. It was his mother's hand, the writing was hurried. He trusted she was not ill. He laid the book down, and Mrs. Moyle took it up ; her husband was far away—but too confiding. St. Quentin was about to open the letter, but at the moment his eye shot up towards the gazelle glance of sunny brightness which half-way met him, her taper fingers pointed to a line of Corneille, and the fatal pencil of St. Quentin wrote an impassioned reply. A presumptuous arm was thrown around that forbidden waist, and the first, we might say the only kiss, imprinted on lips that a dread vow before the sacred altar had proclaimed hallowed but to the touch of one.

Thanks to the echoing stone hall, the noise of footsteps was heard. A servant entered, but not till Mrs. Moyle had extricated herself from the embrace of her guilty lover, and saved, hap-

pily saved her character from the wide-mouthed scandal of the multitude: she was not compromised.

The neglected letter was now opened, and the eye, that but the minute before was melting in love, now lighted up with thoughts of vengeance. His honour, St. Quentin's honour, was at stake. He stamped, he raved. He would have Nugent's life; the honour of his family called on him as its defender. Mrs. Moyle looked up steadily from a kind of stolid reverie, in which for a minute she had been lost—a state of feeling in a woman of natural quickness that there is something horrid in the idea of, and its appearance is terrific; the fixed eye proclaiming that the sense wanders far away. And what was Mrs. Moyle's feeling in that moment? It was that of a person who has run thoughtlessly to the brink of a bare and rocky precipice; another step, nay, another atom of space further, and it had been too late to stop; but she

has in the critical moment perceived her peril. She is saved, and behold her now lost in thought, with fixed, though momentary gaze on vacancy, either in dread horror at her near destruction, or thankfulness for her escape.

She looked up at St. Quentin for an explanation of this sudden paroxysm. In a few words he told her what was the cause. The letter was flung on the table, the servant had left the room, and St. Quentin advanced to clasp her in his arms. She started back, and waved him off. St. Quentin supplicated with a look. "I go to-morrow," said he.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Moyle, and suddenly left the room.

St. Quentin had seen her for the last time. She shut herself up in her own apartment, and no entreaties by note or message could induce her again to appear, till she had ascertained his having quitted the castle. One note she sent him; nor must she be blamed. It ran thus:—

“ We have escaped from ourselves ; let us be thankful. I shall never see you more. My character is in your hands ; I trust it may be sacred. One other request I have to make ; do not act rashly with Mr. Nugent. Remember *you* are not immaculate ; forbear then to judge too harshly ; and oh ! in conclusion, let me entreat that you never, never attempt to see me again. Forget me. Your secret shall be safe ; and though *I* can never more be happy, yet I will try to be dutiful.

C. M.”

Moyle and St. Quentin parted friends, though the scorpion sting of conscious treachery was in the heart of the latter.

Mrs. Moyle sent word that she was too ill to leave her room ; nor did she feign. Her husband remained in blissful ignorance.

CHAP. X.

wand'ring, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplex'd, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours.

PARADISE LOST.

IF, reader, you have any compassion, turn now to Hyde Nugent, the apparently fortunate yet unhappy Nugent, and sympathize with him in the agony, the restless, wearisome excitement of mind in which he passed the sleepless night that followed his proposal and acceptance: or, if he slumbered for a few moments,

the phantasms of a miserable mind, the startings, the agitation, the fear, the almost palpable dagger at his throat, the fancied death-bell in the ear, which disturbed his feverish nerves, and caused the big and frequent tear to roll upon his pillow,—such sleep, such rousings, were worse than a thousand years of broad and waking thought.

And what was the cause of all this horror? There was a twofold cause; debt, a heavy load of debt, and a consequent fear of dishonour when all should be known; and regrets, remorse deep and unavailing, for the unhappy state of Augusta St. Quentin, whose affections he could not be ignorant were wholly his; whether unsought or not, he could be the only human judge. And then the dear and idolized being, whom he loved better than his own soul, Georgina; what, he thought, would be her feelings, now unsuspecting of his entanglements? what would be her wretchedness when the truth burst upon her? Oh, he felt that there was no



remedy for all his miseries but death! Could he have died in the moment when he found that her heart was all his own, he had been happy. A dreadful presentiment struck him with awful force that she never could be his wife, and in this conviction he had almost blessed the charitable hand which would have ended his woes at once. Would Lord Malmesbridge consent to receive him as a son, when he should discover that he was a gambler, a debtor, in the unsparring power of money-lenders; dishonoured, dishonourable; dishonourable in his silence, dishonourable in gaining the affections of the lovely and unsuspecting Georgina; a deceiver of youth, as the world he feared would but too justly pronounce him with regard to Augusta; weak, vacillating, and in his own mind possessing no one good quality; could he expect, dared he even hope, when all should be made known, when the truth should be, with reluctance on his part, slowly elicited by the marquis and his father, that the one would consent to receive

him into his family, or that the other would countenance or pardon him for the thoughtless, nay criminal waste of time and money he had that summer been guilty of? Alas, no! Despair took possession of his soul. His father's horror of all gambling transactions, and above all the knowledge or rather consciousness of the bonds he had given, payable upon that beloved father's death, and all other painful thoughts, rushed in dread array upon his mind, and for an instant tempted him to raise his desperate hand against himself, and thus end woes and life at once. The thoughts of agonized relatives surviving, and suffering by the knowledge of his crime, stayed the rebellious resolution, and defeated the expectant demon which hovered around his nearly lost soul; for we fear there was little of any other feeling that deterred him from this dreadful purpose.

Hyde had indeed ever thought too lightly of religion, or its clear lustre would have shown

him the tremendous sin he for the moment meditated ; and not only this, but its tranquillizing balm, in bidding him elevate his thoughts above this world, condemn all the good it can offer, and disdain all the evil it can inflict, would have afforded him some relief when all other had failed. But alas ! he was destitute of all advice, all sympathy. He had concealed the first false step from his father ; he had slightly regarded the caution of that father, when he set forth the danger of communication with young Millefleurs ; by imperceptible degrees he had been led on from expense to error ; and with the most honourable intentions, had fallen unwarily into an abyss of shame, misconduct, and misery ; the invariable consequence of concealment, an absence, or a levity of religious thought, a depravation of that high-souled feeling which he once possessed, and a consciousness of having gone too far to retrace his steps, in consulting inclination rather than principle.

After this awful night, Hyde had to make up his mind how he was to act as regarded Georgina Capel. His she should be at all hazards, he determined; but his mind was in too disturbed a state to form any other resolutions. The first beams of day-light, and the bright rays of the sun, which brought with them cheering hope and gladness to the hearts of others, to him gave no relief. He lay on his bed of unrest, tossing in the anguish of his soul. He groaned in spirit; and if he prayed, it was but that he might, did he not obtain Georgina Capel, be speedily released from a life he felt would be a burden too heavy to bear.

The breakfast-table had been long deserted by the gay and noble visitors at Blore, when Hyde descended to the saloon. He swallowed his cup of coffee in haste, and escaped into the grounds, before any one had an opportunity of observing his haggard looks and sunken eye, and in the calm contemplation of the lovely scene which the beautiful park and placid waters

presented, as he wandered through a part of the demesne, he in some measure recovered the tone of mind so sadly shaken by the sufferings he had lately undergone. He sought the old abbey, and throwing himself upon the sunny bank near its peaceful ruins, formed wavering and unsatisfactory resolutions for his conduct in the desperate game he had to play. Though young, he had had sufficient experience of the female heart to whisper to him that where love holds sway, all other considerations, all other passions, are but as dust in the balance.

Georgina, in fact, existed but in his presence; she lived but for him; he was the essence of her being; she remembered no longer her individual existence; she knew not what it was to love by halves; she had consented to be his; she knew him, as she thought, to be virtuous, to be completely master of himself and his actions, pure, unentangled, and honourable; she had before received the kind intimation of her parents that her wishes should not be frustrated, and with all

the high feeling of a young and virtuous heart, her hopes were to make him happy in whose society for life she felt she should be blessed. But if Hyde had an idea that she was to be induced to take a wrong step, should a discovery of his real circumstances lead the marquis to withhold her from him, he was egregiously mistaken. Though she would have considered country, friends, society, all but parents and duty, as but grains of incense sacrificed upon the altar of the burning heart, in honour of him to whom she felt and knew herself to be the dearest object of earthly hope, yet though that heart might have broken at the wreck of all her fancied happiness, her sense of duty and propriety would have prevented her from ever complying with Hyde's request to act clandestinely, or in opposition to the wishes and mandates of her parents. And yet such hope was Hyde's. Desperate circumstances call for desperate measures, and he thought, should he fail in openly and honourably obtaining her hand, her affection for

him was sufficiently strong to urge her to a flight and a secret marriage; when a short residence abroad, or any where out of the reach of her relations, would but be the precursor to pardon, and a reception of the fugitives back into the marquis's family.

These were the suggestions of love, fervid and rash, in the bosom of a young and nearly distracted enthusiast. Again came thoughts of that horrid, horrid money;—his debts, his bonds, and Augusta St. Quentin, but her he *would not* think upon. He drove the recollection from his mind, courting the image of Georgina, which kept constantly floating in his fancy's vision.

As he left his retreat, and slowly resumed his homeward route, he determined that the proposal must be broken to Lord Malmesbridge. He thought of requesting his father, to whom he had as yet made no communication, to act for him in this delicate affair, although the fact of an attachment subsisting between him and Lady Georgina had for some time, as we have

said, been evident to both his parents. But his heart smote him as he thought of the destruction he was about to involve that lovely girl in, when, should he obtain her, and the truth of his ruined prospects become known, the anger of his father upon the discovery was to drive them into poverty. He approached the house with the intention of at once requesting an interview with Mr. Nugent, and avoided Georgina and Louisa, whom he perceived walking together in the park. Fraught with these intentions, he boldly ascended to his father's dressing-room, not having discovered him with the other gentlemen in the lower part of the house, but no Mr. Nugent was to be found. He had walked out upon some farming inspection with the duke and Lord Malmesbridge, and thus was the opportunity lost of entreating his good offices with the marquis, and the affairs of the heart sacrificed to the important consideration of a patent threshing machine, or a newly invented ploughshare.

In a stroll after dinner, however, Hyde, rather calmer, managed to separate his father from the rest of the company, and began to open his heart to him ; but he proceeded a very short way, before his newly summoned courage failed him. Mr. Nugent learned but that his son loved Lady Georgina, no news to him, and that his only wish was that the subject might be broken to the marquis without any paternal obstacles being raised.

Perhaps our hero might have touched upon his late agitated state of mind, and from that have gone on to a full confession ; but we know not how it was, he stopped suddenly after having spoken of his love, and Mr. Nugent wishing, with a parent's kindness, to spare all further communication, pressed the arm that now leaned on his, and told his son he should be happy.

Hyde's voice was now choked, and a tear unseen dropped upon his hand. Oh ! how had he been deceiving that generous father, whose

soul and hopes were wrapped in his son ; whose every action had been marked with kindness and tenderness. The thought was agony.

It was now dark, and the brilliant suite of drawing-rooms, with their moving inhabitants, threw out a lure to Mr. Nugent to return to the house.

That evening Lord and Lady Malmesbridge were consulted with upon this most interesting subject, and the good humour and the look of meaning with which the marquis shook our hero's hand on separating for the night, assured the latter that his proposals had been favourably received.

This night was passed by Hyde more tranquilly than the last, yet not without its pangs from the dread that shame and anger awaited him.

CHAP. XI.

Thoughts, whither have you led me? with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported to forget
What hither brought us! hate, not love, nor hope
Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
Save what is in destroying; other joy
To me is lost.

MILTON.

PASSING over the explanations, or rather proposals in form, which Hyde made to Lord and Lady Malmesbridge on the following day, and his hopes from all the marquis said, that Mr. Nugent had negotiated for him in such a liberal way, as to remove all further doubt of

the match being happily arranged ; passing over these, we must inform the reader that Wyndham Herbert had received a letter from Adonis Millefleurs, containing the information which we have stated he meant to communicate, after his last interview with the St. Quentins. It was, however, some days before he could bring his nervous hand into sufficient subjection to allow of his writing any other characters than what might have been taken for Sanscrit ; but a few glasses of Maraschino or Curaçoa, and an enormous quantity of snuff, gave him at length sufficient steadiness to assume the pen.

Retiring after breakfast to the library, Herbert perused the letter of Millefleurs twice over ; thus for the first time, if we may credit his own assertion, breaking through the rule he had heretofore pursued through life, of never giving an epistle a second conning. He had nearly completed his task, when Lady Georgina Capel, with Miss Dacres and Foley Ogle, entered the room. The two latter had, however,

only encountered Georgina in the ante-room, and were besides too much intent upon their own pursuits to think of or speak to any other person. Lady Georgina therefore trusted to have the library to herself, when they should have got what books they were in search of ; or, if she did not wish to be quite alone, it was certainly not *their* company that she desired.

The set then staying at Blore were any thing but literary, at least at this particular time, and Georgina was, in fact, almost the only visitant to the library. It had become a favourite haunt of hers from the first day of her arrival, more through the seclusion it afforded and the consequent opportunity of a reverie, in which it will not be difficult to divine who was the principal object, than from any love of reading that she at the time possessed : for where love and expectation of the beloved object's approach unite in the same happy yet anxious bosom, the mind has little power to apply itself to the consideration of any other theme. Hyde had

found out that this was a favourite retreat of Lady Georgina's not long after his arrival, and it is probable that he would now have made some excuse to be busy amongst the books, had not a letter to his friend Burgoyne, announcing his approach to happiness, at the time occupied his attention.

Miss Dacres and her Ogle had devised a scheme of metamorphosing the Torham assembly at the races into a fancy ball, and were now intent upon the choice of their dresses; no easy matter to decide on in such a case. Divers illuminated volumes of costumes were tossed and tumbled over in a very few minutes; and Lady Georgina lent her assistance in looking for a becoming *parure* for the fair Dian. Herbert remained unnoticed at the other end of the room, and the pair of originals having accidentally discovered a dress of Henry the Fourth's time which we believe had been the appropriate costume of a zany, they pronounced it the exact thing for Sir Gilbert Opal, the more particularly

as the figure was represented with his mouth open ; and screaming with mirth, they ran out of the library to show it to the baronet, each holding a corner of the magnificent quarto.

Lady Georgina was glad at their departure, and shutting the door after them, moved towards a book-case, when she perceived the elegant Herbert, by the hypocritical guise of whose features it seemed, that "melancholy had marked him for her own." Not wishing to be found *tête à tête*, Georgina took up a book, and would have retired, but Herbert prevented her, for this was an opportunity of coming to an explanation, as he to himself termed it, which was not to be lost, and advancing towards her, he opened by degrees a sort of masked battery.

"If I dared to hope, Lady Georgina," said he, "if I dared to hope that what I am about to communicate might be well received, or taken as it is meant, sincerely for your own welfare, and acted upon accordingly by one who is so sensible as yourself, it would carry its own reward

into my bosom, from the consciousness I should feel of having saved a lovely though too confiding person from the snares which I see gaping around her."

"For Heaven's sake, what can you mean, Captain Herbert?" said Lady Georgina. "Pray be explicit, for I am impatient to return to my mother; and let me assure you that if this has any connexion with a former conversation, I can neither listen to, or if I did, could I believe any observations you may make."

"Perhaps," said the guardsman, with a slightly sarcastic smile, "if another than the unhappy Captain Herbert were here, your impatience to return to Lady Malmesbridge might not be so great. But before you suspect me of falsehood, Lady Georgina, it would be but consistent with your candour to hear what I was about to say."

"Captain Herbert," returned Lady Georgina, "when you talk of snares and misplaced confidence, it is not easy to mistake the subject you

allude to ; and considering the circumstances in which you know me to be placed, I cannot help telling you that your present conduct is both illiberal and unmanly. From particular occurrences that have lately happened, and your unwished-for attentions, I may say persecutions, in town, I have been induced to speak thus plainly to you ; and if you have perceived any thing in my conduct inimical to your own wishes, which you have not left me in doubt of, I must say that your attempts to gain a sway over my actions are mean and cruel."

A tear rolled down the cheek of Lady Georgina as she pronounced these words, but quickly recovering herself, all her noble blood and high spirit rushed to her assistance, and enabled her to proceed.

"But go on, Captain Herbert," proceeded she, "go on in your laudable endeavours to depreciate in my esteem one whom I do not disavow is too dear to me ever to suffer from any thing you can insinuate, although you dare not

openly declare what you would desire me to believe. At present I must wish you good morning."

Herbert stood before the door.

"Lady Georgina," said he, "I cannot willingly consent to your leaving me in so prejudiced a state of feeling. Let me say a few words in my own defence, which, as a relation of the Duke of Bolingbrook's, and in his own house, I have a right to demand a hearing for, although the privilege of your sex allows you the option of doing justice or not, as you think fit. The tongues of men are their own, and when a false opinion is encouraged in the mind of a woman, they ought in mercy, if not in equity, to be listened to by the party in whose estimation they have been thus lowered."

"Say quickly what you intend, Captain Herbert," returned Lady Georgina, "and do not think to keep me a prisoner in this room, for the means of release are very near." And she moved towards the bell-rope. "Come away

from the door, and I will hear you ; though I fear it will be a twice told tale, than which you will recollect there is nothing more tedious."

The artful Herbert having gained the ear of Lady Georgina, and made himself appear the sinned against, thus turning from accuser to defender, before he proceeded in his attempt to undermine Hyde, recapitulated the wrongs he wished her ladyship to believe himself had received at her hands.

" Since you are unwilling," said he, " to remain in this room, will you so far favour me, Lady Georgina, as to walk under the shade of those trees," pointing to some in the park, " and I will not detain you longer than the least possible time in which you may be convinced of the bitter injustice you are doing me, by adopting opinions which I see too plainly have taken root in your mind ; at whose instance I must of course be ignorant."

" At no one's instance, Captain Herbert," replied Lady Georgina ; " and from no greater or

less evidences than those of your own conduct. But you shall not have to accuse me of injustice. We will walk under those trees, for I hear Miss Dacres's voice, and I apprehend you will wish neither her nor Mr. Ogle to hear our conversation."

"You are infinitely obliging," replied Herbert; "walls have ears; the open air is better calculated for all species of communication. Though I am not about to speak treason."

"Are you not afraid that hazel-bushes and sequestered walks may have ears also, Captain Herbert?" said Lady Georgina, as they left the library, and proceeded into the park, while she looked at him with a penetrating glance. "Or when you take those lonely walks through the thick woods, do you usually wear fixed spurs?"

"There again you wrong me, by all that's sacred," said Herbert, as his dark eye met hers.

"I suppose you can explain that too!"

"I can and will, if you but give me time."

Lady Georgina looked somewhat contemptuously at him.

“But,” continued Herbert, “at present I have a dearer object to achieve.”

They were now under the shade of some old oaks in the park, whose knotted arms and rugged trunks had been the silent witnesses to many a tender tale of love, but to no interview where there was less likelihood of affairs being brought to a happy conclusion than the present.

“You see before you, Lady Georgina,” resumed Herbert, “a heart-broken man; one now careless of good or evil, but who, having had the fortune, ill has it turned out for him, to become acquainted with excellence, which to see and know was to love, has also had the misery to behold his suit spurned, and the additional pang to discover that the mind of a lovely being, for whom he would gladly have sacrificed his life, and held such conditions cheap, to have known but that his passion was returned, has been perverted with the idea that this wretched

person is possessed of a disposition which the lowest of earth's creatures would blush to acknowledge. That such, on your ladyship's part, is the case, every succeeding day tells me, alas ! too plainly; that the injury you thereby do me, and the wrong I suffer, are proportionate to my innocence and kindly feeling, I protest in the——”

“ Hush, Captain Herbert,” interrupted Georgina; “ do not call down the wrath of an offended power on your head, by swearing to what in your heart you know to be untrue.”

“ I swear,” said Herbert, “ that I am basely wronged by some one. Who he may be, time shall discover, but not shield him.”

“ Whom you hint at I will not appear to mistake, but your conclusions are as ungrounded as your former communication I believe to have been false, and feel to be cruel. Did not you say you yourself *never entered* a gambling-house, and did not Mr. Millefleurs the next day tell me that the very evening on which you specified Mr. Nugent to have been playing,

you yourself either lost or won a considerable sum of money?"

Herbert's spirits seemed "a little dashed" at this discovery, but the boldness of falsehood quickly returned to his aid.

"And do you credit what Adonis Millefleurs says for one instant, Lady Georgina?" said he, with a smile; "a person on whose word——"

"There is about as much reliance to be placed—as on Captain Herbert's," interrupted her ladyship. "Have you any thing further to communicate?"

"Since I find you so obstinately determined to retain your prejudices against me, Lady Georgina," said the captain, "I should almost fear that any thing I might advance would be disbelieved, were it not supported by the evidence of this letter, which I was reading when you entered the library. I am sorry that you should hold my character in so bad a light as to render such proof necessary, but——"

"Captain Herbert," interrupted her lady-

ship, "I do not wish to be acquainted with your secrets. You cannot, I am certain, have any correspondence that concerns me. I do not wish to hear any part of the letter——"

"But it does vitally concern you and your happiness, which you are about to risk (pardon me for speaking so plainly) with a man whom I have discovered to be every way unworthy of you. One moment, Lady Georgina, yet pardon me. Look at this letter, from a particular friend at Brighton, in which your name—see—is mentioned." He then pointed to the letter, and read—"Nugent is deceiving both Lady Georgina Capel, and a lovely girl who is staying here with her family—a Miss St. Quentin; whom, after having gained her affections, he has basely deserted for a woman of higher rank, an attempt which he knows (and we know too Wyndham) can never succeed, from his being so dipped. In fact, I should cut the gentleman, were I to meet him in town."

"I will not believe it!" exclaimed Lady

Georgina. "And whom may the letter be from? this high-minded person, who intends to cut Mr. Nugent?"

"Adonis M——," Herbert suddenly stopped, recollecting that a few minutes before he had represented the word of Millefleurs to be not worthy of reliance.

"You just asked me if I believed what Mr. Millefleurs (for I perceive your letter must be from him) ever said: but that was when he was speaking of yourself; what his malignant spirit may induce him to say of others, I suppose I *am* to give credit to. I know not, indeed, what to think. I wish you had not told me this, Captain Herbert. But, no; I cannot, will not believe that such is the case, till I hear it from Mr. Nugent's own lips. He is the soul of truth and honour, and never, never would deceive me."

Herbert smiled. He saw the torture he had inflicted on his victim: it was the torture of doubt, more agonizing than the most frightful

certainty. He folded up Millefleurs's letter, and returned it to his pocket, in the conviction of having at length shaken Georgina's confidence in her lover. He saw the swelling of her almost bursting heart, as her bosom heaved with unutterable feelings: he saw the tear ready to start, and the flushed face and wild eye of the beautiful girl. He knew that she was not for him; but he felt a secret joy in blasting the prospects of his rival. With such diabolical feelings, he proceeded in his work.

"It pains me, Lady Georgina," said he, "to place a person, whom I once considered as a friend, in such an odious light; and it gives me greater pain to cause one pang to your own invaluable heart; but the skilful surgeon probes deep the wound he would heal, to save his patient future suffering. I once loved you—love you still—oh, too, too dearly! You have told me not to hope; you have destroyed my hopes of happiness on this earth;—can you then suppose

that I should have any design in thus revealing to you the truth other than to save one, whom I must ever esteem as the first of women, from the designs of an adventurer and a deceiver?"

"Oh, spare me! spare me! Captain Herbert," exclaimed Lady Georgina; "do not apply such terms to *him*! do not kill me!"

Bid the arch-destroyer to spare an angel in his power, if that were possible: as well might Georgina deprecate the malice of the earthly fiend Wyndham Herbert.

"Believe me, I am actuated by no other motive than the Christian wish to spare you; but it is from him who would revel in the vain delight of having it reported that he had first gained, and then laughed at, the affections of a marquise's daughter! Oh, I know him well! Hear me, Lady Georgina, for I must speak plainly. Mr. Nugent is a ruined man; he is enormously and irretrievably in debt;—ay, debts has he, that his father's whole fortune

would not cover, and of Lady Wetherby's fortune he stands no chance; besides which, his faith, if he ever had any, is plighted to another."

A loud scream from Lady Georgina caused Herbert to look round. His eyes and ears were disagreeably saluted with the figure and voice of Hyde Nugent, who had caught Lady Georgina's hand, and prevented her from falling.

"'Tis false, sir!" said he, in the tone of madness, and the voice of thunder; "'tis false! What villany is all this?"

"I have that which will prove it is but too true," replied Herbert, nothing daunted by the sudden apparition of the man he had been so basely traducing.

"You shall answer this, sir, most seriously," said Hyde, "at a period not far off, I trust. At present, the only terms I can find bad enough for you are liar and coward!"

"Neither, as you shall find to your cost," returned Herbert, as he walked off in the direction of the house.

Herbert and Lady Georgina had wandered, during the foregoing dialogue, to a considerable distance. She now found herself supported in the arms of Hyde, who, on his part, from the extraordinary nature of the conversation he had unwillingly overheard, was racked with suspicions of he knew not what. Could Georgina be false to him? He repelled the thought. He knew of Herbert's attachment to her, but he had never seen any thing in her conduct to warrant the momentary admission of so terrible an idea. And yet what object could Herbert now have but to ruin him in her estimation, with the idea of succeeding to his place, in the villanous defamation of his character which he had just heard him deliver? He was perplexed; he knew not what to think.

To account for Hyde's appearance, it is only necessary to say that, having finished his letters, and perceived from his window Lady Georgina, whose figure he could not mistake, walking in the park with her father, as he thought, he re-

solved to join them, in the happy certainty of being hailed with pleasure as an addition to the party. The soft grass had prevented his foot-steps from being heard as he came up with them, and perceived, instead of Lord Malmesbridge, the man who was trying to effect his ruin by the artful dress in which he clothed his communications to one who had made such strenuous endeavours not only to disclaim, but to confute the calumny. But doubt *had* taken hold of Lady Georgina's mind, although her answers to Herbert were moulded in a manner which she imagined would lead him to disbelieve such being the fact. She knew him not. He was not to be deceived : he had seen his temporary advantage, and improved it ; nor was the young and inartificial Georgina Capel a match, with all her high spirit and genuine feeling, for the Machiavellian tempter, the false and unprincipled Herbert. In this state of perplexity, with a shade of doubt on both sides, did our young

couple find themselves when left by Herbert, who with no enviable feelings returned to the house. Lady Georgina freed herself from the arms of Hyde, who had pressed her to his heart, and would have held her there for hours, even in the delirious state of his soul, which almost took away the powers to think or act.

“ My loved Georgina, what does all this mean ? ” said he at length.

Georgina could not answer ; she burst into a flood of tears, which somewhat relieved her swelling heart. Hyde took her hand and pressed it kindly, but elicited no word from her lips, and she hid her face against his shoulder in an agony of grief.

“ Georgina, if you would not kill me,” exclaimed Hyde, “ say, what has that villanous Herbert done, or what was his object in telling you the falsehoods which I heard him utter ? ”

“ Oh ! I knew that they were falsehoods,”

said she, at length. "Bless you, dearest, for that word of comfort. It is, it is all false. I knew it. Pardon me, dear Hyde, for suspecting you one moment."

"Pardon you, my love! nay, you should pardon me for thinking one moment——"

"What? what *could* you think that I——? Oh, Hyde!"

"No, no, dearest one, I do not think it. I think nothing but that Herbert is a reptile.——Villain!"

"Oh do not think of him; he is too base, too mean for your resentment. He did indeed tell me a tale of your having——"

"What?" vehemently demanded Hyde.

"Oh! be more gentle, my own Hyde."

"Am I your own? Oh, I am, I am, yours and no other's, dearest beautiful being; but tell me, what did this wretch say?"

"I never did or could believe it, Hyde: no matter what he said."

"I *will* hear it. I heard some part," exclaimed Nugent, grasping her hand. "I have been traduced, I have been slandered, and I have a right to hear the whole."

Georgina trembled at his violence. "Be patient, and you shall hear it."

"Do not preach patience now, Georgina, when honour and reputation,—when more than all,—when *you* are at stake. Preach patience to the idiot Opal, or the arch-fool Ogle, but do not mention it to me."

"Hyde, you terrify me with this violence. Your looks are as fearful as that angry sky. I am not used to be spoken to in this manner."

"Georgina, would you make me mad?"

"Alas!" said Georgina, "Herbert has already made me nearly so."

"Herbert! tell me, what did he say of plighted faith? He lies, he lies, whatever he might say. Whom did he mention? What did he say?"

“ Miss St. Quentin——”

Hyde leaped with frenzy, and stretched his arm and clenched fist towards Herbert. He cursed him in the bitterness of his heart.

“ What could he make of it ?” said he, “ Oh, worse than devil ! Yes, I did know Augusta St. Quentin ; we were almost brought up together as children ; but——”

Georgina heard no more : she sunk on the grass and fainted. They had insensibly wandered into a secluded part of the beautiful grounds. A rivulet murmured near this fairy spot, and joined the greater stream at a short distance from the ruined abbey, but the long drought of summer had nearly dried it up. Hyde recollected that at a turn, where a statue of Venus seemed to rise from the stream, the water was at the deepest. It was the work of a few seconds to snatch the lovely Georgina in his arms, and with desperate strength hurry her towards this point, where depositing his beau

teous burden on the green bank, he gathered some water in the palm of his hand, and sprinkled it over her white temples. Mourning over his beloved one, the lines of whose figure were as faultless as those of the statue at whose feet she lay, Hyde was nearly bereft of reason. He execrated himself and Herbert, and despairing of being able to revive her, he cursed the day he was born. "Georgina, Georgina, my own lovely one, give me some sign of hope. Oh, speak to me, speak to me! In pity open those loved eyes. Alas! alas! she is gone for ever; I have killed her," he exclaimed, "I, and that villain Herbert." And he bent his lips to hers, as if to drain her last breath; and he rolled in agony on the ground, and again took her in his desperate arms, and held her to his heart. Oh, could he have then died, he thought he had been happy; but he was doomed to endure more of this life's ills; he was still to suffer.

A deep drawn sigh, and the opening of her eyes, whose long fringes were as quickly shed over them again, told of returning animation.

“ My own Georgina, my beautiful idol,” exclaimed Hyde, “ bless me with another glance of those eyes; give me one slight word, one little sound of that sweet voice. Oh, do not sigh so; you make me think your poor heart will break. Alas! who will have broken it?” And he again clasped her to his breast, and held her there, till the returning pulsation of her bosom as it beat palpably against his own told him she was once more his.

She revived, but to a sense of her wretchedness from the few words Hyde had dropped, confirming partly, as she thought, the appalling communication of Herbert. Oh! she might well believe the rest, since some of it was true. But this or any other conviction she expressed not to Nugent now. She listened weeping to his half frantic and confused explanations, unintelligible to the calmest brain; how much

more so than to hers, who had undergone so recent and so severe a convulsion? Leaning on her doubted yet fondly beloved Hyde, she walked slowly towards the house, while the silent tears coursed each other down her pale cheeks.

They reached the hall door in good time, for a coming thunder-storm was driving the rest of the party in from archery, which they had not long commenced; and Hyde had the satisfaction, such as it was, to see Lady Georgina nearly at the head of the grand staircase on the way to her room, before the thoughtless and giddy crew made their appearance, loud in their own praises.

It was a heavy day for Hyde and Georgina, as well as Herbert; but in the evening, the two former had entered into such full and confidential explanations, that the captain had the whole burden thrown upon his shoulders, and love and reliance were as strong as ever.

Ruminating upon what was the best course

to pursue with Herbert, Hyde took his hat after breakfast the next morning, and strolled out before the library windows. Villain as he thought and called Herbert, he knew there was but too much truth in the communications Lady Georgina told him he had made. He tried to persuade himself that they were false, and but the mere effects of jealousy; but there was still a voice in his ear that would be heard, which told him—more than he liked to confess true, even to himself. He was presently joined by Georgina, and unconsciously they wandered to the spot where those painful moments of suspense and excitement had been felt. The stream was swollen with the rain that had accompanied the thunder-storm, and which had continued to fall during the night, though the sky was now cloudless. They shuddered involuntarily as they neared the place, for the lightning had struck down the statue, and torn up and scorched the ground on which Georgina had lain. Neither spoke, but the hand of each

clasped the other more firmly, as if they thought Providence had yet reserved them for some good.

Their walk was pursued, and striking into a shady part of the grounds, they were about to return towards the house, when a boy, whom Nugent knew to be the gate-keeper's son, approached and delivered a note to him.

"Save me from a challenge!" said Hyde, smiling, as he opened it.

Lady Georgina looked anxiously in his face. The smile was dashed. For a moment he turned pale, and he might well have added to his first quotation,

This conscience doth make cowards of us all.

The boy answered to his inquiries, that he had received the note from a gentleman who came to the lodge gate that morning early, upon horse-back, "a gentleman with great whiskers like," as the boy expressed himself; and he had followed Mr. Nugent from the house with the

dispatch, as the gentleman wished an answer to be left at the lodge as soon as possible.

“ It requires no answer,” said Hyde, as he put the note in his pocket, and sent the boy off.

Lady Georgina grew alarmed. The seal had engaged her attention as the back of the note, while Hyde read it, was turned towards her. There was a crest upon it, and underneath, the letters “ St. Q.” The name of St. Quentin immediately recurred to her memory. What could it mean ? Was there any truth after all in Herbert’s assertions, or rather those of Millefleurs ? Her heart misgave her ; and immediately the idea of a challenge from the brother of her whom Hyde had so deceived, caused her unutterable fear and anxiety. Hyde’s changing countenance added weight to her suspicions, and earnestly she entreated him to let her know the truth. But Nugent evaded all inquiry, and laughed, or tried to laugh off her fears. She would not plague him with fruitless questions, since she saw he wished to conceal the

purport of the note ; but she hung on his arm as they walked slowly home, and looked up with marked anguish in his face.

The note was, in point of fact, from St. Quentin. He had arrived the night before from town, and quartering at an inn not a great way from Blore, had in the morning mounted a horse, and ridden over with his communication, penned over night, and left it at the lodge with the directions Nugent had heard. As September had commenced, he feared a sporting fit might take our hero out before he was apprized of his (St. Quentin's) arrival, and he had no wish to remain in all the unpleasantry of anticipation for a whole day to no purpose ; he was therefore early upon the wing. The contents of the note were short and pithy, merely saying, that if Hyde had any satisfactory communications to make in explanation of a very extraordinary and unfeeling line of conduct which it at present appeared to the writer he had pursued, he should be happy to hear them, and

trusted they might again be to each other as brothers. On the other hand, if it were true that he was to be married to Lady Georgina Capel, St. Quentin said he should expect no other answer than the appearance of Hyde attended by a friend, on a certain part of the ground to which the boy would show him, at five o'clock, where he hoped there would be no chance of interruption.

As the young pair threaded the shady walk which led them towards the house, Hyde suddenly stopped. Leaning against a tree, and almost unable to support his own weight, he gazed at Georgina as if he were looking his last. A tear stood in his eye, and without speaking, he drew her yielding form towards him, and pressed her to his heart. It was a moment of mingled pain and pleasure, that close embrace and silent kiss. They were affianced; yet fate seemed to threaten, in the excited mind of Nugent, that they should never be connected by a nearer tie.

When we are called to an earthly retribution for follies or misdeeds into which we have either heedlessly rushed, or weakly allowed ourselves to be drawn, we are generally but too apt to throw the blame of our sins upon fate and fortune; and they would in fact be very convenient confessors, only that unhappily not being flesh and blood, they cannot give us sufficient assurance that we are absolved, or prevent our consciences from again receiving the weight, with the various additions which a conviction of truth has endued them with.

Georgina, although anxious to a most painful degree of intensity, forbore to dive into the counsels of Hyde; but oh! what agony was hers during the remainder of that day, or rather for the few hours that intervened between the conclusion of their walk and their next meeting. She tried to compose herself to read, to think of any thing but the note her lover had received;—in vain. Sleep fled her eyelids, for she had courted an hour's slumber, and lain

down on her bed ; but rest was not for her. She was sick at heart ; she wept, and trembled. She sought her sister's room, to communicate her fears, but Lady Elizabeth was down stairs. Louisa was also absent from hers. Lady Malmesbridge, with Mrs. Nugent and the duchess, had driven out ; not a creature to whom she might speak her thoughts was to be found. To descend, and mix with the Plantagenets, and Miss Dacres, or again run the risk of meeting Herbert, was what she could not bring herself to do. She was anxious to see Hyde, but there was no chance of that in the part of the house where the Malmesbridges' rooms were. Had he asked admittance to her apartment, we almost fear her prudish notions of propriety would not have carried her far enough to refuse him ; nay, if her maid had presented herself, she would have sent her to bring him up ; but Greville had affairs of her own to attend to, and did not make her appearance till it was time for her mistress to dress for dinner. When that im-

portant period arrived, Georgina almost determined not to join the party at dinner, so pale did she look ; but the thoughts of a meeting with Hyde, at which she might elicit from him what at present gave her so much uneasiness in the ignorance or doubt of, prevailed over all other considerations. In haste, therefore, she dressed, or rather passively submitted to the hurried operations of her maid, and in anxious hope that Nugent might already be in the drawing-room, she descended ; but no Nugent was there. Dinner was announced, without his having appeared, or Captain Herbert. A thousand new suspicions crossed her mind. Hyde and Herbert absent ! Yet the note was not from Herbert.


The duke and others of the party began to express anxiety. Herbert, he said, had gone out shooting in the morning, but Nugent he had seen within the last two hours.

Mrs. Nugent felt all a mother's fears, of what she knew not, except that she conjured up some

imaginary danger, as all mothers do; for she was ignorant of the quarrel between her son and the guardsman.

As the company paired off for dinner, Georgina took an opportunity of whispering to the duchess and her mother, that she was very unwell, and begged to be permitted not to join the party. On a hot day in summer, or the beginning of autumn, dinner is certainly a most unpleasant service to one who is indisposed either in mind or body, but as one naturally affects the other, the anxiety poor Georgina felt may easily be supposed to have incapacitated her from undergoing the attentions of a man, whoever he might be, that she did not care about, when her whole soul was intent upon one on whose well-being her very existence depended.

In the mean time, Hyde had waited with no very pleasant feelings for the appearance of the boy who was to conduct him to the place of meeting. His pistols, which he lightly hoped



in town had been used for the last time in an angry way, were once more prepared. He took no second; he might have asked one of the Lords Capel, but he wished to avoid making the affair public, if this was possible, and he trusted to the honour of St. Quentin so implicitly, that he thought no chance of unfair play could be where he was one of the parties. The feelings of Hyde as regarded Lady Georgina, we may imagine, but not describe. He met the boy at the appointed hour, and was led some way through that dark part of the approach, from whence diverged a narrow and devious path, striking into the thicket. Following this, they arrived at an amphitheatre of wood enclosing an area of the smoothest turf, where stood St. Quentin and Herbert in close consultation.

It is necessary to explain that in his morning shooting excursion, Herbert had met with Horace. They had been sometime previously acquainted; and to account for his sudden appearance at Blore, St. Quentin did not hesitate

to enter into a full explanation of circumstances. Herbert made a ready offer of his services, which were gladly accepted. Nor is it at all marvellous that St. Quentin should have come down unattended by a friend; for it must be considered that his regiment was in Ireland, and that all officers, except those who may have any very urgent business, are in summer with their corps; add to which, town was completely empty, and the difficulty under these circumstances of immediately procuring a man who will take upon him such a disagreeable office, it must be confessed, is not very trifling.

“ We have waited for you, Mr. Nugent,” observed Herbert.

Hyde did not deign a reply.

“ You have come unprovided with a second !” again observed Herbert.

“ I trusted to the honour of Captain St. Quentin,” said our hero at length, “ and I am truly sorry to see *him* no better supplied.”

Herbert answered with a look of scorn, and

Horace advancing drew Nugent aside while he demanded if he had any thing to urge in his defence of such a line of conduct as that which he had adopted.

A short communication ensued between the principals, marked by passionate gesture on one side, and stubborn inflexibility on the other. It was apparently unsatisfactory in conclusion, for as they separated, St. Quentin turned towards Herbert, and spoke a few words ; when the latter, with satisfaction which he in vain strove to disguise, stepped the ground.

The peaceful grove was now to be made the scene of blood and wrath. The boy had been despatched with his reward before the pistols were displayed, and was too much occupied by the thoughts of inexhaustible treasure which were contained in the possession of a half-crown, to attend to what he thought a very minor consideration, the meeting of three gentlemen in a wood.

It was Hyde who fell. His blood sprung

like a fountain from its source, and washed the green leaves, till they poured it down again in rivulets upon the turf. One struggle of agony, —his features quivered, and his body writhed, and life to all appearance parted. The vindictive Horace cast one haughty unmoved look upon his victim, and turned slowly away. Herbert gave a half-muttered laugh of exultation, and following St. Quentin through the grounds, accompanied him up to town.

And here might Nugent long have lain, the propitiatory sacrifice to a sister's wrongs, had not two gamekeepers, attracted by the sound of shots, proceeded to the spot from whence it issued. They found Hyde, as they thought, dead ; but he had only fainted from intense suffering, and loss of blood. The ball of his adversary had passed through his body, yet he still lived ; for as they turned the supposed corpse over, a slight moan was heard ; and more intent upon saving life than pursuing the murderers, as they not unaptly termed those who

had committed the bloody deed, they laid him down again upon the turf, till a litter and assistance could be procured to convey him to the house.

In the mean time, Georgina, who had parted from the gay throng on their proceeding to the dining-room, wandered with uncontrollable restlessness through the galleries and corridors of the abbey, her anxiety increasing with the approach of evening. At length she heard a distant footfall. "He is coming at last," thought she, while her finger was raised to her lips emphatically. But no sound was there in the lone passage, save that of her own breathing. The footsteps had ceased. Again they were heard, —heavy,—it could not be Hyde;—more than one person was approaching. She turned to seek her own room, but the footsteps gained on her, and she stopped. A low murmur, as of one in agony, struck her terrified ear, but he who uttered it felt less than she was doomed to suffer in the next moment, when she

beheld Hyde weltering in his gore, borne in the arms of four men, and to all appearance just breathing his last. A scream of horror was heard throughout the house; a simultaneous rush was made from the dining-room; and Lord Malmesbridge, who knew his child's voice too well to mistake it even in the tone of distraction with which the shriek was uttered, flew up the staircase with the rapidity of lightning. Alas! he arrived but in time to receive his daughter in his arms, as she fell back from the body of Hyde, on which she had, with almost supernatural force, flung herself.

She was carried to her own room, her splendid white satin robe contrasting horribly with the dark hue of Hyde's blood, which, welling from his wound, had in the embrace plentifully communicated itself to the dress of Georgina.

Who shall describe the feelings of the parents? *We* give up the impossible task. They blamed Herbert; indeed no one entertained a doubt upon the subject. He and Hyde had both

been absent together, and now Herbert made not his appearance. Besides, a coolness had for the last day or two been observed between them, and it was therefore certain that Herbert was the person who had shot Hyde. None knew, or had known the truth, except Georgina, and she lay insensible.

Turned was the gay scene to one of sorrow. Even the heartless wept, and Blore became the house of mourning. For two days Georgina lived, unconscious of what was passing around. She had seen all that was dearest to her lying, as she thought, dead; and that thought was death to *her*. Her feelings were too intense to let her drag a chain of weary days along. That wild embrace had been her last; she knew no one after that moment of despair; her blue eyes lost their speculation; she was alike insensible to the lamentations of grief, and the kindness of sympathy; and on the second day she was no more!

Peace to her broken heart and virgin grave!

Let us turn to the other sufferer. He had no fever; the blood he had lost prevented this. For hours he lay without sense; but his brain turned not, with his woes. Slowly he came to himself, but spoke no word save the name of Georgina. He groaned, but less from bodily than mental anguish. His only wishes were, to shut out self from his mind's eye, or to be annihilated,—to be buried in oblivion, him and his misdeeds, his faults and sufferings. The wish was vain. As vain his other wish—to see Georgina Capel before he died; for his end he thought fast approaching. He knew not of her dreadful state; her life, as it were, hanging by a single thread; her parents without one ray of hope that she would be spared. Once the name of Augusta died, half articulate, upon his lips; but his tongue was nerveless; and although his mind and heart were consuming with the slow fire of their own intense feeling, the tongue refused to obey his government, and he lay upon his pillow, unable to express one of the thou-

and conflicting thoughts that dashed in quick succession through his brain.

* * * * *

Not till after Hyde's removal to his father's house did he learn the full measure of his grief. All had been carefully concealed from him, while he wavered between life and death at Blore Abbey; but now the recollection came vividly upon his mind, of the hearse, whose white plumes he had seen moving slowly down the approach, while he lay sleepless upon his bed; though at the time he had thought it was a dream.

They told him indeed Georgina was gone; gone without seeing him! but little did he think that very hearse was conveying her, a lovely young woman of nineteen—his betrothed bride—to the silent tomb.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION.

THERE are whispers of a match to be completed, which was shrewdly guessed of at Blore. Sir Gilbert Opal will, it is said, soon lead to the altar the beautiful and accomplished Charlotte Plantagenet, now daily to be seen with her bridesmaid elect, choosing, with infinite taste, the rarest of *blondes*, and the costliest of pearls and satins which Howell and James's can produce. Her stately bridegroom meets her open mouthed in her drive up Regent-street, and as he gently squeezes the fair hand so soon to be his property, leaves in it a diamond ring, or cross of rare device; little dreaming, good easy man! that he will have to pay for all the valuable trifles, which in anticipation of soon becoming sovereign mistress of a fool, and five-and-twenty thousand

a-year, the haughty and royally descended dame gives daily orders for.

The Morning Post tells us, in an extract from the journal of a celebrated watering-place, that "at a late *bal costumé*, the great heiress Miss Dacres wore a dress which cost 1600*l*." Whether this circumstance speaks most highly for her wealth or sense, we leave the reader to judge: indeed we have already stated her share of *common sense* to be extremely scanty; and knowing this, scepticism will perhaps be weaker on the subject of another report; namely, her approaching marriage with Wyndham Herbert, captain in His Majesty's — regiment of foot guards.

That the heiress and guardsman are now on the most affectionate terms, is quite certain; they having met at Brighton soon after the general departure from Blore. That the lady's skill in taming the fire of a proud Bucephalus attracted the admiration of royalty on a late occasion is also true; and it is equally correct

that Foley Ogle received his dismissal for not allowing himself to be driven to the races in her much-admired tandem.

*Extract of a letter from Frederick Burgoyne
to Henry Nugent, Esq.*

Rome, Feb. 20, 182

* * * *

IN fact, my dear Sir, you could not have done a wiser thing than to send him abroad, even had his bodily health not required a milder climate. For mental ills, we know there is no remedy so likely to avail, as constant change of scene, and the attentions of cheerful friendship. As to myself, whatever cause I may have for not being the gayest of human beings, I strive, on more accounts than one, to let no shade of melancholy appear when in the company of Hyde. I trust you will be gratified at the change in his spirits when you see him. I shall not permit his de-

parture from hence, till warmer weather sets in; and as I intend accompanying him as far as Paris, you need be under no apprehension that he will suffer from want of attention. Forgive me for declining your most kind invitation to Nugent Hall; if my present intentions hold, I shall this summer travel through Greece, nor indeed do I think it probable that England will ever see me again. I have gently broken to Hyde the communication your last letter contained. At first he shuddered; but as I proceeded, "Enough for one day, Frederic," he replied; "give me time to feel in some degree a less forcible remembrance of *her*—whom I cannot name. My father requires me to do justice, and attempt to heal a broken heart. What can mine be made of that I still exist?—or does he think that even the devotion of my remaining life, with the sincerest esteem and friendship, can make up for the absence of a passion all should feel who marry, and which I can never, never, know again." I forbore to

touch again upon the subject for some time, but we have since had many conversations, and I have no doubt his noble and generous disposition will at length admit the conviction of what his duty calls upon him to perform. His greatest fear seems to be, that not only love, but even esteem and regard for him have totally subsided in the heart of Augusta. Let him be but assured of the contrary, and allow him time, and I have no doubt that two people may be restored to happiness.

* * * *

The other parts of the letter referred to private matters, and particularly to the settlement of Hyde's gaming and other debts, which his fond father had contrived to discharge.

L'ENVOY.

AND now, fair and gentle readers, the Author takes his leave, in the certainty of having given offence in a quarter which little suspects his near

neighbourhood. It was not the Author's intention, when he commenced this work, to introduce the personages to whom he alludes into its pages; but he has been induced to do so in the hope that one very dear friend may derive benefit from their warning voice; one, whose mind, though highly honourable, is unfixed: and it was with the wish of giving stability to that friend's character, that he has taken up, for the first time, the pen of the novel writer, as more likely to aid him in his aim than that of the moralist.

END OF VOLUME III.

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